Your Guide to the **World Ag Expo** — pages 6, 7 and 9

VALLEY VOICE

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Visalia Council Approves Sales Tax Hike Ballot Measure

Catherine Doe

After ten months of research and discussion, the Visalia City Council gave a green light to putting a sales tax measure on the November ballot. The vote was five-0 during their work session February 1st. But not all council members were in favor of raising taxes. Council member Warren Gubler said that he is never in favor of raising taxes but was not opposed to letting the voters decide. If the November ballot measure is approved, sales tax in Visalia would go up by a half cent and is projected to raise approximately ten million dollars a year. The measure only needs a 50% plus one votes to pass.

BMAC Gives Their Support

After meeting twice a month for five months, the Bond Measure Advisory Committee (BMAC) recommended that the City put the sales tax measure on the ballot. Many of the BMAC members were participants in the 2013 Blue Ribbon Committee. At that time the Blue Ribbon Committee recommended against putting a similar measure on the ballot. But because of the city's growing needs and the positive survey results, the BMAC felt it was the right time.

Their biggest reason for recommending the ballot measure was that Visalia's sales tax revenues have been less than projected. The weak sales tax returns are due to the fact that shoppers are increasingly buying more on-line than at brick and mortar stores. When buyers forgo Visalia shops, and buy their good on-line, Visalia losses revenue.

The BMAC also pointed out that the recession forced significant personnel reductions, the city needs to continue to build cash reserves, and that the city needs to rebuild pension reserves. They also pointed out that Visalia will not be able to keep up with the public safety needs in the future unless another source of revenue is found.

The BMAC report stated, "Having performed our 'due diligence' in reviewing Visalia's financial challenges between August 2015 and January 2016, the BMAC recommends the following to the City Council in order to maintain our city's 'quality of life."' We propose a 0.5% local sales tax for the 2016 ballot (equivalent to 50 cents per $100 in taxable purchases). We propose this be a general tax requiring a 50% public approval."

Survey Results

The BMAC based much of their final decision on a survey conducted by a

BALLOT MEASURE continued on **10 »**

Phil Cox is the current Tulare County District 3 Supervisor. Courtesy/Tulare County

Amy Shuklian is a Visalia Councilwoman. Courtesy/Amy Shuklian

Cox, Shuklian Square Off in District 3 Electoral Race

Dave Adalian

At a low-key event last week, Tulare County District 3 Supervisor Phil Cox officially launched his campaign for a fourth term as Visalia's primary representative, promising to continue his work for more streamlined, responsive government.

"I'm not done," Cox, who has served three, four-year terms on the Board of Supervisors, said. "We still have efficiencies that can be achieved."

At the forefront of Cox's thinking are the county's upcoming large construction projects. Cox, before entering politics, owned a pair of construction firms in Visalia.

"We're talking about (my) construction experience," he said. "I'm the supervisor who will jump up on the roof."

Board Remaking Itself

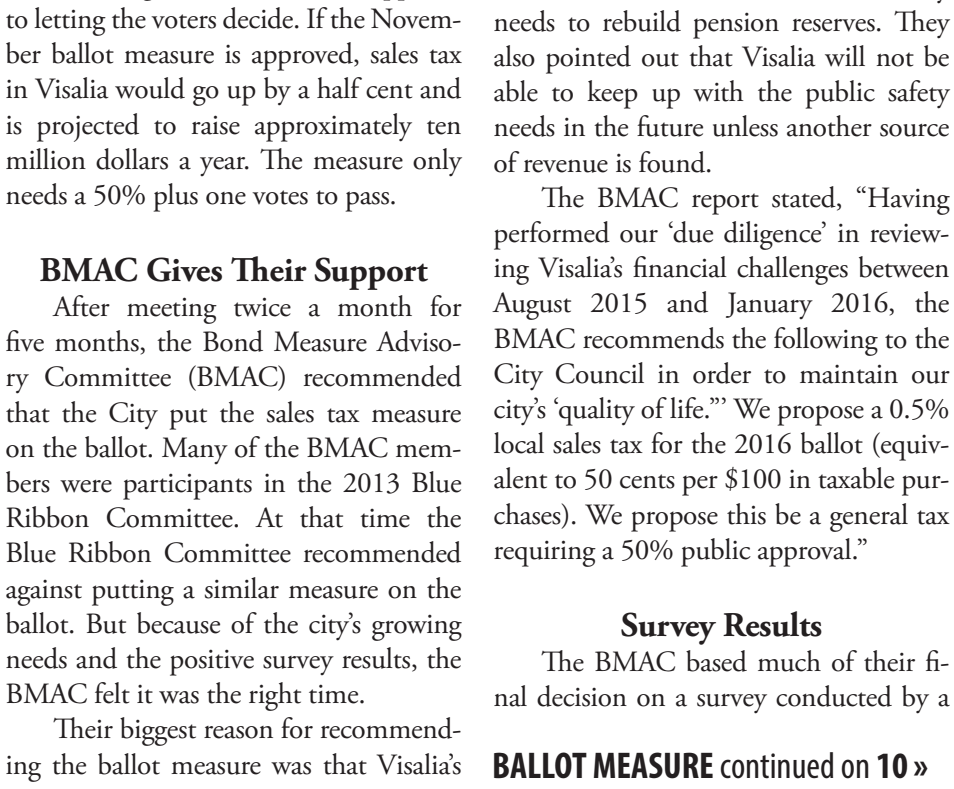
The Board as whole, Cox said, has been restructuring how it does business, and he wants to continue working with his fellow supervisors toward that end.

"We have been changing the way the county operates," he said. The focus has been improving "quality of life" for county employees with better working spaces and resources, an approach he took in running his own businesses. "Providing my people with the right tools was key to making money."

He also found the county's money

DISTRICT 3 continued on **10 »**

Visalia Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for Emergency Communications Center



"This is a historic day for our city, as this facility will benefit our citizens and our employees. The Visalia Emergency Communications Center will house the 911 communications center, emergency operations, fire administration, information services and the traffic management system." – City of Visalia Mayor Steve Nelsen

"This facility will be great and what is even better is the people who will work in it. Our dispatchers received 97,000 911 calls and 169,000 calls for service last year. They're the really the front line of the services we provide and it's a historic day for all of us and the citizens we serve." - Visalia Chief of Police Jason Salazar

Huerta Declares Candidacy for 21st Congressional District

Catherine Doe

Emilio Huerta filed papers to run for the 21st Congressional seat against incumbent Rep. David Valadao. Huerta is a Kern County lawyer specializing in unions, worker rights and establishing sustainable non-profits organizations. After much deliberation with his family, he decided to shutter his law practice to concentrate

Emilio Huerta

on his campaign. He is the son of Dolores Huerta, one of the original organizers with Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers. "The Huerta and Chavez families are going to win this seat back," said Huerta at the Tulare County Democrat

HUERTA continued on **10 »**

Nordstrom Delays Decision

Catherine Doe

Visalia and Fresno are going to have to wait a little longer to find out where Nordstrom will build its new distribution center. According to Mike Olmos, Visalia's City Manager, he called Nordstrom in January to see if they were still on track. The representative said that the date had been pushed out to April or May.

Olmos, who has been through this process many times, said that it is not uncommon for large companies or large facilities to take more time than they originally projected. He said that he and Nordstrom have been going back and forth with additional information about the building site, but that the company has all the data and information they need to make the decision.

The person who negotiated the incentive package for Nordstrom is Visalia's contact. Olmos said that the site

NORDSTROM continued on **16 »**

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Far From the Final Analysis

I'm writing on the eve of the Iowa caucus, the results of which will be old news by the time you read this. But, precisely because I want to write about the Iowa results, some waiting is entailed--and it gives me the perfect opportunity to make a few predictions.

OK--this is not, as my wife calls it, rocket "scientry." But here goes:

On the Republican side, it seems to me that Donald Trump, making a verb of his surname, will triumph comfortably first over Ted Cruz and, more easily, over a third-place Marco Rubio. Even though Trump poses an existential threat to Republican presidential aspirations this year--in that he has, in particular, alienated the Hispanic vote (Remember how Mitt Romney faired in the last election, after alienating the Black vote?) --I expect his polling leads to hold, translating to a solid victory.

The Democratic caucus will be narrowly taken by Hillary Clinton, but only because voters will at the last minute reflect on her vast experience--after which the "Feel the Bern" fire willbecome an ember everywhere else but in New England and, possibly, California.

Shortly after Iowa--and on both sides--it seems to me that all of the lower echelon candidates will begin to peel away. Except Jeb Bush. What we've got here is a failure to communicate. He'll bungle along, opportunistically, hoping to rise while others fall. The question coming away from Iowa will be how deep into the process he can carry such a stratagem. He has raised far too much establishment money to just quit now, even if Iowa proves to be an unmitigated catastrophe.

Here's a full stop--and a solemn promise to leave the above intact. The morrow will see how much of a monkey I am made.

OK--someone hand me a banana.

On the Democratic side, the results--far from old news--may not be known for weeks. When I wrote "narrowly taken by Hillary Clinton," I did not mean re-count narrowly.

And I entirely forgot about the evangelical vote. It's a good thing I'm not charged with writing "Political Fix." While I pegged Rubio accurately at third place, I did not foresee Cruz winning over Trump. I feel bad about this--not because I was wrong, but because either of them are seriously in the running. I'd sooner vote for a monkey.

Trump is a cartoon and Cruz is the reincarnation--at least physically--of Joe McCarthy.

But now that the votes are in, the only thing I think I know is that the establishment money will flow to Rubio.

I also don't think, after a strong--if second place--finish, that the GOP will further attempt to undermine Trump. They'll just let him ride.

As will the Democrats with Sanders. Clearly, the fact that he is a self-avowed socialist will matter little as we venture ever deeper into the process. It didn't seem to matter in Iowa, of all places--and I don't think it will hurt him if he makes it to November.

The People, once again, want a change. Why else would the likes of Sanders and Trump be so popular?

But the good thing is that neither is beholden to any hidden interests.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Fix

Catherine Doe

Debbie Does Double Dipping

Remember when Dr. Evil put his pinky on the corner of his mouth and declared that the world would be held ransom for ONE MILLION DOLLARS? That movie moment is what came to mind when reading about Assemblyman Devon Mathis' newest attempt to pass a bill. His signature bill for 2016 is requesting approval of ONE MILLION DOLLARS to be used to ensure that veterans are receiving their benefits.

Many vets are not getting all of the benefits they deserve because they don't know about them. Mr. Mathis' bill tries to fix that problem. His efforts are noble, but what struck me as a little too ironic is his abundant concern with veterans getting their benefits, while staffers formerly in his inner circle felt that he was inappropriately collecting his.

Soon after Mr. Mathis was elected, he and his staff had a discussion about his Veteran's Administration (VA) benefits and what he received from the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). His staff felt strongly that he should stop receiving his benefits or donate them back to the VA while he was in office. They felt that if Mr. Mathis were collecting his veteran's benefits, while collecting his state salary, he would be double dipping.

Mr. Mathis collects 100% disability benefits from the VA because of a head injury he sustained on tour in Iraq. The 100% designation doesn't necessarily mean that he is completely disabled, it just means that as long as he is getting treatment for his injury he receives the benefits.

It's unknown exactly how much Mr. Mathis receives, but his former staff said they believe it is somewhere around $3,000 a month from the VA. Also according to former staff, his wife receives in the ballpark of $2,000 a month from the WWP as a home healthcare-aid to take care of him because of his disability. That alleged $2,000 a month from WWP is on top of his state health benefits, which are considered the best in California. One Republican establishment politician described it as triple dipping. Another former staffer had this to say, "Fiscal conservative my %*#."

Another wrinkle is, if it's true that his wife does receive money from the WWP to take care of her husband, does she travel with him and their newborn twins to Sacramento?

No one would deny that Mr. Mathis has earned his VA benefits. But Mr. Mathis has the sacred duty of representing his constituents as he stands on the floor of the California Assembly. If he is declared 100% disabled by the VA, does his disability interfere with his job in serving the citizens of Tulare County? Or does his disability not interfere with his work? Which brings us right back to whether he should be receiving his VA benefits, and on top of that, his state salary at the same time?

It also begs the question, how did Mr. Mathis square his decision to keep his VA and WWP benefits with the opinions of his former staff who wanted him to give them up?

I think the key word in all this is "former."

I jest about the reference to the Austin Powers movie, but it brings me to another point about his benefits. If Mr. Mathis serves out his 12 years as he intends to do, his Veterans benefits would add up to more than $700,000. That would cover almost an entire year of the cost of his legislative bill. The movie joked about the little the amount it was required to hold the world ransom, but it's no laughing matter when you are taking taxpayers' money. As another former staffer said about Mr. Mathis' double dipping, "Legal does not mean moral and it certainly flies in the face of everything he's talking about regarding veterans being taken care of."

Mr. Mathis hasn't done anything against the law, but as a local Veterans Advocate said, "it is troubling." Double dipping isn't fraud, but is a way of gaming the system without going to jail. He may not be going to jail, but he also may not be going back to Sacramento next January.

I'll Drink to That!

You would think that watching the seventh Republican Presidential debate wouldn't be so much fun, but it was. I came up with a drinking game where everyone, meaning me and my husband, had to drink shots of beer every time Senator Marco Rubio said, "when I am President of the United States."

I guess Mr. Rubio has read "The Secret" and was manifesting his future during the debate, because he said the refrain so often that I was passed out under the table within 30 minutes.

I always thought Mr. Rubio was going to get the Republican nomination and obviously he does too. If everyone polling under 10% would just drop out, he would. Another advantage Mr. Rubio has is that he is the number one pick of the Koch Brothers. The Koch brothers are actively campaigning against Donald Trump because they do not believe Mr. Trump is a conservative and they are savvy enough to know Mr. Trump's presidential nomination will destroy the Republican Party.

I wasn't really passed out on the floor. Instead of slamming a drink each time Mr. Rubio said, "When I am president," I found myself yelling

POLITICAL FIX continued on **4 »**

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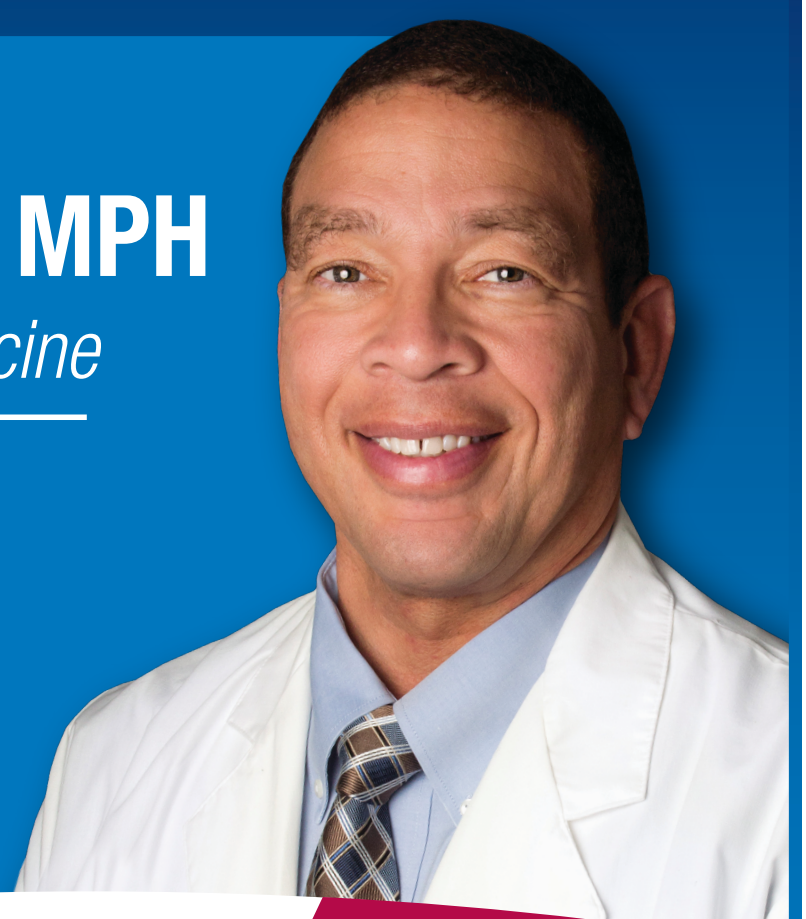

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Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

at the TV and wanting to have a drink.

Though I see him as the only viable candidate, I don't understand what everyone else sees in him. Is it me or is Mr. Rubio constantly in attack mode with his laundry list of cookie cutter answers? I feel his pain being the youngest candidate and constantly having to defend himself against his older and bigger siblings. But grow up already.

Next to Governor John Kasich, Mr. Rubio looks so immature. How can the audience watch Gov. Kasich's performance and not think that he looks, acts, and is, more presidential?

Even Governor Jeb Bush looked more presidential than normal during the last debate "without the elephant in the room."

And when Rand Paul said that he is the only true fiscal conservative on that stage, while pointing his finger in Mr. Rubio's direction, why doesn't that get more traction?

Republicans plan on spending more on the military while cutting taxes. Mr. Paul asks the logical question, "How do you plan on paying for that?" The American Military Industrial Complex is the biggest thing in the world by leaps and bounds. Do we really want to make it bigger? Can't we just get a little smarter?

Also, one cannot call oneself a fiscal conservative and approve of spending three million per inmate a year at Guantanamo as Mr. Rubio supports. He even wants to increase the population at Guantanamo by sending ISIS fighters who survive an American attack. What the heck do we want them for? Send them to Saudi Arabia and let the Saudis do what they do best, and hang their enemies.

Let's Caucus

This rant leads us to the Iowa Caucus that took place earlier this week. If you skipped the whole thing and binged watched Long Island Medium here is a painless review.

My prediction the day before was that Mr. Rubio would do much better than anyone predicted, and he did. His performance was the biggest news of the evening. Ted Cruz won the caucus and Mr. Trump was a four-point second.

But Mr. Rubio's thin third place behind Mr. Trump lead him to give what was considered by many a victory speech. The television viewer was actually treated to five victory speeches that night by first, Mr. Rubio, followed by Mr. Cruz, Mr. Trump, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders.

It was an unusual night where it seemed everybody was a winner.

But here is the skinny on the Iowa Caucus. Iowan Democrats are 99% white and liberal. So it's no surprise that Mr. Sanders almost tied Mrs. Clinton. Let's see how he does in not so white South Carolina on February 27. Iowan Republicans are 99% white and evangelical.

So it was no surprise when Mr. Cruz won. Let's see how he does in not so evangelical Nevada on February 23. One thing is for sure after the Iowa caucus, now that the Republican freak-out is in full bloom over the possibility of Mr. Cruz or Mr. Trump getting the nomination, the establishment's money will start pouring into Mr. Rubio's coffers.

Another sticking point about the Iowa caucuses is that they have not been picking Republican winners. In 2012 they couldn't even decide on a winner. First they declared that Rick Santorum won.

Then they said that Mitt Romney won. Then Ron Paul's team members showed up a few months later en masse and claimed the majority of the convention delegates.

On the Democratic side of the race, Iowa will eventually declare Mrs. Clinton the winner but just barely. Even so, Mr. Sanders will have earned almost half of the delegates. Ironically it was Mr. Rubio's "victory" speech that illustrated why Mr. Sanders has waged such a successful campaign.

Mr. Rubio said about his parents, "Less than a decade after they arrived here with nothing, my father a bartender on Miami Beach, they owned a home. Not a mansion, but a safe and stable home in a safe and stable neighborhood."

Is anyone still deluded enough to believe that a bartender, or anyone else in the service industry, could afford to buy a home in 2016?

Mr. Rubio's anecdotal story that he repeats over and over just fuels the fire. It is why two long shots like Mr. Trump and Mr. Sanders' grassroots campaigns have swept the country. Americans are angry that working hard does not mean financial security for them or their children, and the Clinton and Bush political machines severely underestimated the power of that anger.

Calling all Tulare County Middle-Aged Men

No really, calling all Tulare County middle-aged men, because I think there are still a few who haven't filed their paperwork to run for Tulare County Supervisor District 1. If any more declare, all the candidates won't even fit in a clown car. There are currently seven candidates with more to file, I am sure. Filing just opened and goes to March 16 if no incumbent files. Normally filing ends March 11, but Supervisor Allen Ishida is the incumbent and he has declared his candidacy for Governor.

The Candidates are: Edward "Ted" Macaulay, former mayor of Exeter and three-term city councilman; Kuyler Crocker, Strathmore farmer and Sup. Ishida protégé; Dennis Smith, owner of National Builders Supply in Farmersville and president of the Central Valley Tea Party; Vincent Salinas, Visalia real estate agent and former Visalia Planning commissioner and former Redevelopment Agency member; Angel Galvez, employee of the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency, Mental Health Branch; John Elliot, publisher of *The Kaweah Commonwealth* of Three Rivers and a current Tulare County Planning commissioner; and Jim Qualls, Visalia Unified School Board member since 1989.

Though Mr. Quall's current term runs to 2018, ironically he didn't want to pass up the opportunity to run for an open seat. At the time it looked like a simple race. Now it's a like a running of the bulls.

One political pundit said, "it's like it's all one guy. How do we choose?"

So how to choose? *The Foothills Sun Gazette* and the *Valley Voice* have decided to put on a candidates' forum in May in the heart of Tulare County Supervisor's District 1. And even though the numbers are looking like the Republican Presidential race, we promise no kid's table.

Visalia to Look at New Airline Bids, Airport Options

Nancy Vigran

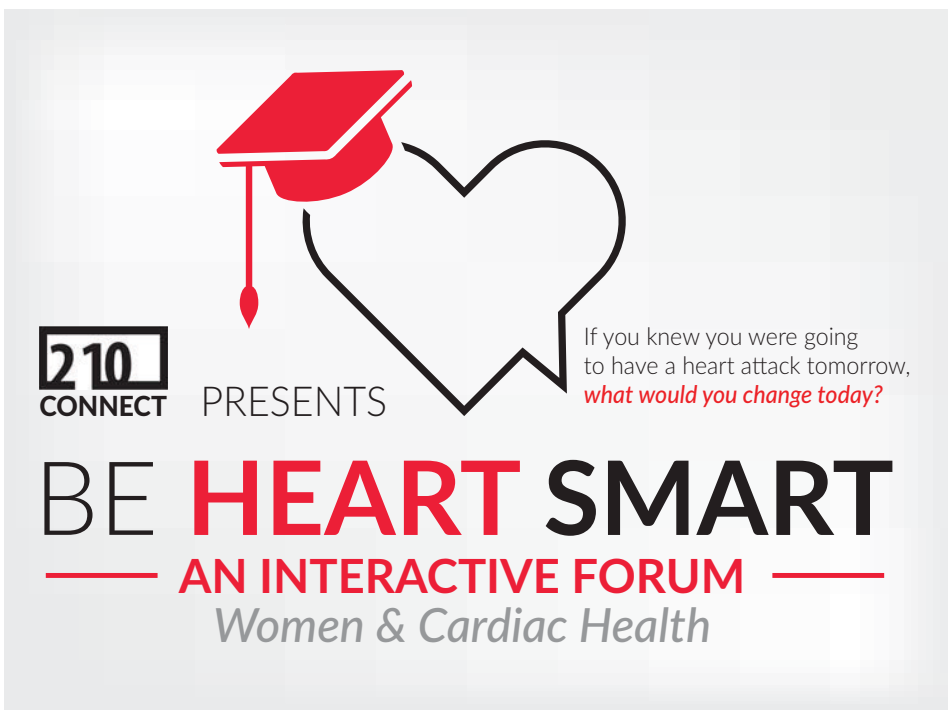
In light of the recent unannounced departure of SeaPort Airlines at the Visalia Airport, city officials have some decisions to make, again, regarding the airport's future.

On a 3-2 vote, the Visalia City Council voted in 2014 to recommend SeaPort as Visalia's Essential Air Service (EAS) carrier. The alternative was to take a buy-out and cease passenger service at the airport.

Mayor Steve Nelsen and Councilman Greg Collins voted against the service, preferring the city accept a Federal Aviation Administration option of a temporary buy-out from passenger service. The $2 million buy-out, still on the table, could be utilized to upgrade the airport and attract corporate business as well as another freight provider – FedEx and Ameriflight currently fly cargo in and out of the airport.

SeaPort was subsequently awarded a two year EAS contract by the Department of Transportation (DOT) totaling nearly $2 million in subsidiaries to provide flights to the airport.

AIRPORT continued on **16 »**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Why Care About Native Freshwater Fish?

Jason Baumsteiger

Even with a strong El Niño year, there are no assurances the drought is over. Clearly we need a better plan for future droughts and that plan needs to include provisions for native freshwater fish. But why include native fish?

There are many reasons. Many feel that native fish have a right not to be driven to extinction for economic purposes. Indeed, enough people feel this way that this is Federal and state law. In addition, many native fish support human needs, such as providing food, recreational opportunities, future medicinal alternatives, economic well-being or purely aesthetic value. For species like salmon and trout, the benefits to humans are straightforward. But what of the many less charismatic species which naturally occur in the state? Do they matter? Is there any reason to keep them around, or can they be replaced with introduced species which more readily support human economic objectives?

Sculpin: one of California's underappreciated native fish. Courtesy/Jason Baumsteiger

Our recent studies on sculpin have introduced ideas which shed light on the discussion. Sculpin are small (10 inch max) bottom dwelling freshwater fish and one of the most abundant native fish groups in California. Most Californians are unaware of these fish. Between their small size, overall abundance and general unwillingness to take a hook, sculpin have largely been ignored. But this oversight helps make them special. Because they have been ignored, their history reflects the natural history of California's waterways. By studying native fish like sculpin, we can learn which freshwater systems were historically connected/isolated and how long ago this occurred.

So how do we get this information? Fortunately it is stored in their DNA. An organism's DNA contains the unique blueprint or code for that specific individual.

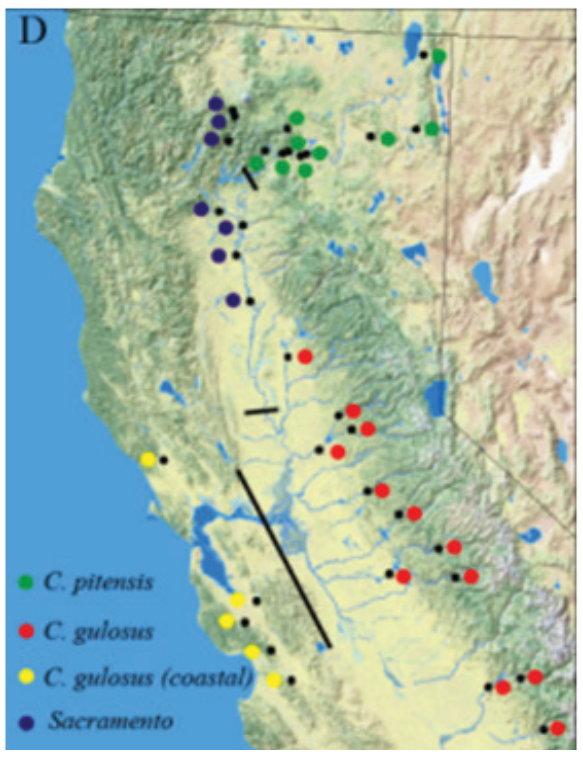
However the overall code for a species (group of inter-mating individuals) is largely the same, with only slight variations between individuals. Those variations directly reflect where the species is found and chance, both of which allow or prevent the code from being passed to future generations.

By matching specific variations to specific regions, we can trace how and when species were introduced to our systems and which show signs of historical connectivity. For example, some sculpin found in the Pit River (extreme northeastern CA) actually originated from the Snake River system in Idaho (over 400 miles away). The same data support geologic findings that the Pit River actually once flowed in the opposite direction of its current path today (~three million years ago).Variations inherent in the DNA structure of sculpin are also correlated with different ecological conditions. There is a reason for different sculpin in different areas. Each is adapted to local ecological conditions and part of a specific freshwater system. We rely on these systems to maintain, clean and filter our water and they work efficiently, with little expense. Thus the ecological and environmental "system" is the important idea here, composed of multiple species who have evolved to work together to produce these results. Sculpin are one of those participants, along with specific bacteria, aquatic vegetation, aquatic insects, and other native freshwater fish species. If we start removing parts of the system, eventually the native system will collapse. A freshwater ecosystem can be thought of as a game of Jenga. Sure, you can remove parts and the tower stays standing. But eventually, if you remove too many, the tower falls. And if you lose pieces and try and replace them with an alternative (let's say Legos), is the tower nearly as sturdy?

Native freshwater fish and their supporting ecosystems are important. I am not saying we should stop everything to protect these fish, only that we consider their importance in water management plans as we go forward. After all, they are in decline, due to ascending human prosperity.

If we could glean this much knowledge from just one species group (sculpin), imagine what other information lies in the DNA of the dozens of other native species in the state. And with all of the changes we are making, such as dams, aqueducts, and reservoirs, California's native fishes are increasingly vulnerable. Their decline not only risks losing a wealth of information on California's rich past, but also indicates the well-being of some of our important freshwater ecosystems may not be stable.

Ash Creek in the Pit River basin. Courtesy/Jason Baumsteiger



Historical connectivity of species to specific regions. Courtesy/Jason Baumsteiger (2014)

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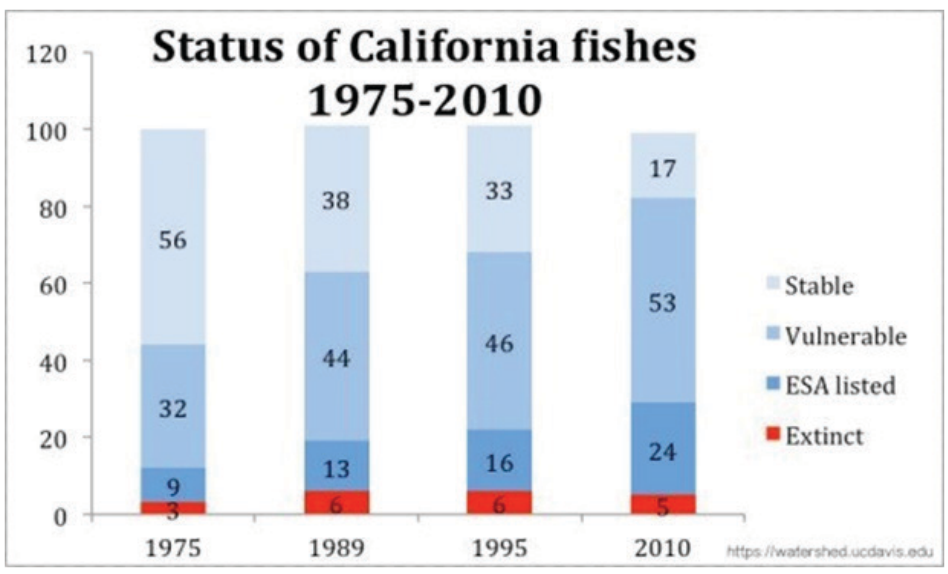

Numbers of California native freshwater fish species in four assessments of their status (stable, vulnerable, ESA-listed and extinct). Bars reflect percentages. Courtesy/UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences

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Agriculture

World Ag Expo Opens Tuesday to Farmers Worldwide

Nancy Vigran

This year, the 48th World Ag Expo looks larger and even better than ever before with more than 1,500 exhibitors from around the world, all vying for the farmers' attention.

Likewise, spectators come from around the world to find the latest in technology for preparing for, planting and harvesting their crops.

As usual, WAE takes place the second week in February, Tuesday-Thursday, February 9-11.

WAE offers cooking demonstrations, fashion shows and more than 40 seminars on variety of topics highlighting irrigation, the dairy industry and the future of agriculture.

New this year is a seminar on apiology, as well as some seminars presented by Women in Agriculture for Mentoring and Empowerment (WAME) on mentorship and the future of agriculture.

"We want to educate the young people regarding opportunities in the field of agriculture," said Pamela Sweeten, a founding member of WAME. "There is so much more to agriculture than just cows and plows.

"It's not just food, but it's the cars that we drive and the pharmaceuticals we take and more."

When Sweeten started in the ag industry many years ago, there were only one or two other women attending any almond industry meeting or seminar, she said.

Today, the demographics are different.

"Women come with a different perspective," she said, referring in part to motherhood, "we look at things differently.

"We all eat, we all eat food, sometimes we don't speak up," she said, "when we need to."

Young women and men are urged by WAME to attend as many networking and mentoring sessions they can during the three-day event.

While there are approximately 375 varieties of crops and products, grown and/or made in the local area alone, there is a lot of information for everyone packed into WAE.

The film Dead Harvest, which premiered at Visalia's Fox Theatre in November, will air at 10:30am and 2pm each day of the farm show, said Marissa Carpenter, head of media and public relations for WAE.

"The movie, Dead Harvest, chronicled the effects of years of federal water policy, environmental lawsuits, and the four-year drought on the Central Valley," as formerly reported in the Valley Voice, and features Tulare farmers Gus Garranza and Mark Watte as well as Congressman Devin Nunes.

The Equipment Showcase, or "Ride and Drive" event has fast become a highlight of those looking for the newest technology in farm equipment, Carpenter said.

Operators pay an additional fee to have the opportunity to show off their tractors and machinery in action, she said, from Bobcats to the largest of tractors and trucks, as well as ATVs and utility vehicles.

"It's a nice way for attendees to have it come to them, instead of walking around,'" she said.

While walking around is, no doubt, the best way to see all the show has to offer, WAE has also set up live-feed cameras around the grounds, which can be accessed via computer on the International Agri-Center website.

Viewers even have a period of time in which they can scan around and zoom into a particular area, Carpenter said. And, the cameras are on now, even prior to the show opening.

Each year, a group of farmers, ranchers, and ag industry professionals judge and select 10 outstanding new products from World Ag Expo exhibitors. This year's list includes -

- Ace Pump Corporation – Gemini Dual Pump Kit
- AGCO Corporation – Hesston-Built WR9800 Series RearSteer
- ANC Technology – Intelligent Wireless Irrigation Control System
- Coldwell Solar, Inc. – MegaWash
- Jacto, Inc. – Jacto PJB-16 Battery-Operated Backpack Sprayer
- LiftGator – LiftGator XTR
- Orchard Machinery Corporation – Fully Automated Shaker Technology: Tree Seeker
- Red Fox Safety Products – Fox-Paws
- Tule Technologies – Tule
- Stanley Convergent Security Solutions – Videofied AG Alarm System

WAE hosts more than 100,000 agriculturally-interested spectators, due largely to its hundreds of volunteers working tirelessly throughout the year to create the largest agricultural event in the world.

World Ag Expo general admission tickets are $15.

Show hours are 9am-5pm, Tuesday and Wednesday and 9am-4pm on Thursday.

Free shuttle service is offered to the International Agri-Center from five different locations in Tulare to ease parking congestion.

More information regarding World Ag Expo can be found worldagexpo.org.

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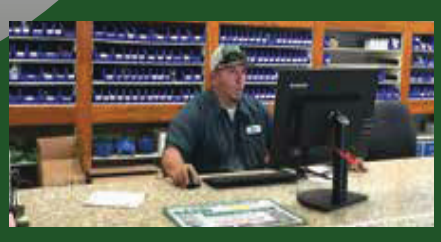

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Agriculture

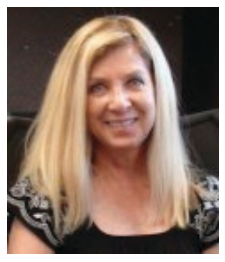
World Ag Expo to Feature Harden, Ross and Kinoshita on Panel

AgNet West

The World Ag Expo will feature a seminar session with one of the nation's top agricultural leaders. U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Krysta Harden is a featured panelist during the women's seminar series. Harden will join California Secretary of Agriculture, Karen Ross, and Tulare County Agriculture Commissioner Marilyn Kinoshita on the Future of Agriculture panel, moderated by AgNet West News Director Sabrina Hill.

Krysta Harden, US Deputy Secretary of Agriculture

Karen Ross, Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture



Marilyn Kinoshita, Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner.

Krysta Harden was sworn in as the Deputy Secretary for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on August 12, 2013 after unanimous confirmation by the U.S. Senate. Deputy Secretary Harden helps lead the department, working to strengthen the American agricultural economy and revitalize our nation's rural communities.

Raised in Camilla, Ga., Harden comes from three generations of southwest Georgia farmers with a proud farming heritage that dates back to the 1800s. As a daughter of farmers, she understands the changing face of agriculture over time, and the need for commonsense policies and programs that create and expand opportunities in rural America. In her role as Deputy Secretary, Harden builds on Secretary Vilsack's leadership to support a diverse and abundant agriculture sector, expand new markets for agriculture at home and abroad, further strengthen conservation of our nation's resources, and promote a thriving biobased economy. Harden's highest priority is to ensure that beginning farmers and the growing ranks of agriculture – women, young people, immigrants, socially disadvantaged producers, returning veterans and retirees – have access to the programs and support they need.

Karen Ross was appointed Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture on January 12, 2011, by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. Secretary Ross has deep leadership experience in agricultural issues nationally, internationally, and here in California. Prior to joining CDFA, Secretary Ross was chief of staff for U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, a position she accepted in 2009. Prior to that appointment, she served as President of the California Association of Winegrape Growers from 1996-2009, and as Vice-President of the Agricultural Council of California from 1989-1996. Before moving to California, Secretary Ross served as Director of Government Relations for the Nebraska Rural Electric Association and as Field Representative for U.S. Senator Edward Zorinsky.

Marilyn Kinoshita joined the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's department as an inspector in 1993, and has since worked in most of the divisions within the department. She began her Tulare County career working in pesticide use enforcement, and then served as a standards and quarantine inspector before becoming the department's Dinuba District Inspector in 1999.

Now Tulare County Agriculture Commissioner, Kinoshita was first promoted to Deputy Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures in February 2004, a position responsible for the direct supervision of 29 ag inspectors and 16 agricultural aides. Kinoshita was promoted again in October 2009 to the position of Assistant Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer, the second highest ranked position in the department. She was appointed as Tulare County Agriculture Commissioner in 2010, then reappointed for the position in 2014. Prior to coming to work in Tulare County, Kinoshita worked six years for the Merced County Agricultural Commissioner's office as a pest detection trapper. She earned her B.S. in Agronomy from the Arkansas State University in 1985, but says she first became interested in agriculture while growing up on her family's farm in Nebraska, where they raised cattle and grew alfalfa, soybeans and wheat.

Sabrina Hill is the Farm News Director for AgNet West Radio Network and host of its Farm City Newsday. An award-winning journalist, Hill has a background of more than 20 years as a news professional. She has worked in print and television news as well as radio. She is an active member of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting, and was elected by her peers as the 2016-17 Western Region Vice President. In addition, she is the chairperson for the NAFB's news service committee.

The Future of Agriculture panel session is scheduled for Wednesday, February 10, at 2:00 p.m. in Seminar Room 3. Admission to the seminar is free with paid admission to the expo. This is the first year for the women's seminar series, which is sponsored by Women in Ag for Mentoring and Empowerment (WAME) and co-organized by Hill and California WAME leader, Pamela Sweeten.

Other seminar topics and titles include: Reaching a New Level of Consumer Understanding; Varying Careers for Women in Agriculture; Effective Lobbying for Agriculture; Networking and several others.

Abandoned Citrus Groves Face the Bulldozer

Kate Campbell, CFBF

Dead and dying citrus trees are being removed by officials in San Bernardino County because of concerns the trees pose a serious threat to nearby commercial citrus groves.

The county took action after sending landowners a series of warning letters in December outlining the threat of infestations of the Asian citrus psyllid, a pest that can spread a fatal citrus disease known variously as huanglongbing, HLB or citrus greening.

After no response from landowners to warnings, trees were removed under authority of the state Food and Agricultural Code, which allows neglected or abandoned orchards that harbor agricultural pests and diseases to be declared a public nuisance and removed at the owner's expense.

"The entire county is now under quarantine for (Asian citrus psyllid)," San Bernardino County Agricultural Commissioner Roberta Willhite told landowners in a letter. "Citrus trees that are not being taken care of represent a major risk to healthy citrus in the area."

Noting that HLB is considered the most serious citrus tree disease worldwide because it is fatal and untreatable, Willhite said the county's "only option currently is to perform control measures focused largely on prevention of the disease by attempting to reduce the ACP population."

With hundreds of citrus acres abandoned statewide, Alyssa Houtby of California Citrus Mutual said, "We've been working on this issue extensively the last few weeks. Abandoned orchards are a serious concern as we try to fight against the Asian citrus psyllid."

She said some tree pull-outs initiated last week came on land jointly owned by Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The land was purchased a number of years ago for flood control.

"It was a huge victory to get the counties to agree to remove the orchard," Houtby said.

Although state statute provides authority for county officials to act when there are clear pest and disease threats to agriculture, some counties have not needed to use the authority in the recent past and have been reluctant to take action, she said.

"Currently, CCM and the state's Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program are working with county agricultural commissioners to abate truly abandoned orchards," Houtby said.

She described the abatement process as "very cumbersome, long and full of

CITRUS continued on 8 »

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Agriculture

Citrus

Continued from p. 7

legal roadblocks," but said it's "a necessary piece of the puzzle."

"Really, we need growers—sometimes residential property owners—to voluntarily remove abandoned orchards," she said.

Another complication, Houtby said, lies in the fact that many properties contain more than 24 trees, which the California Department of Food and Agriculture classifies as commercial-scale citrus plantings and therefore not eligible for the state's coordinated residential treatment program. But property owners with that number of trees often don't consider themselves commercial growers.

"Unfortunately, in most cases homeowners with two to three acres of citrus growing more than 24 trees may not be properly treating for the psyllid for various reasons," she said. "Ideally, we would like to see these trees removed."

The California Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program has staff dedicated to farmer outreach in commercial growing regions, said Bob Atkins, the program's statewide grower-liaison coordinator. Each grower liaison is keeping track of abandoned orchards in his or her area of responsibility and trying to work with landowners, he said.

The drought and inadequate water supplies have also contributed to the problem, he said. In some cases, commercial groves can be saved if adequate water becomes available in time; in other circumstances, removal and replanting is anticipated.

"We want to give people notice and time to assess all their options, so they can come to their own solutions to address the threat," Atkins said. "We've got recommendations, but growers need to decide what's best for their situation."

Estimates vary for the number of citrus acres with trees that need to be removed, but Atkins said it's in the hundreds of acres.

San Bernardino County citrus grower Chuck Hills estimated there are about 300 acres of abandoned or neglected citrus in his county alone.

One problem growers in more urbanized areas encounter comes from farmland purchased for non-agricultural purposes that's awaiting development, said Hills, who serves as San Bernardino County Farm Bureau president.

Another problem in urbanized areas is residential development that adjoins farmland, he said. Sometimes, residential property owners are reluctant about following ongoing treatment plans and their citrus trees become vulnerable to psyllid infestation, which poses a threat to neighboring citrus farms.

San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chairman James Ramos said his office has worked closely with county officials to enforce state codes dealing with abandoned crops.

"We know the timing of treatment and tree removal are everything in dealing with the psyllid," Ramos said.

Gayle Covey, field representative for Ramos and county Farm Bureau executive director, said declaring a grove to be a nuisance and potentially putting a lien on someone's property is "a serious matter."

"It's not a path we want to follow, but considering the seriousness of this threat, we have to be ready to take action," Covey said.

Atkins said the state's citrus plantings are approaching the season for new growth, which attracts psyllid feeding.

"With all the rain, even trees that look ratty will flush and grow beyond the dead top stock," he said. "A lot of people will say, 'But my tree is dead,' implying the tree is unlikely to flush, but the rootstock will continue to produce growth."

County-wide quarantines for the Asian citrus psyllid are in place in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura counties, with portions of Alameda, Fresno, Kern, Madera, Merced, San Benito, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Stanislaus counties also under quarantine.

The quarantines prohibit the movement out of the quarantine area of citrus and curry leaf tree nursery stock, including all plant parts except fruit, and require that all citrus fruit be cleaned of leaves and stems prior to moving out of the quarantine area.

A crew removes citrus trees in an abandoned grove in San Bernardino County. The trees will be pulled out and shredded to prevent infestation by the Asian citrus psyllid, which can spread a fatal plant disease. Citrus trees become especially vulnerable during spring because the psyllid feeds on new growth, which flushes during that time of year. Courtesy/Gayle Covey/CFBF

In Florida, HLB has taken a severe toll on citrus groves. Florida Citrus Mutual said in December that HLB is endemic to Florida and has reduced production there more than 50 percent during the past decade.

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2016 World Ag Expo Seminars Snapshot

Tuesday, February 9

9:30am Dairy Seminar - Fodder - Animal Nutrition is No Longer Cut and Dried Speaker: Curt Chittock, Simply Country, Inc.

9:30am Education Seminar -Preserving America's Most Precious Asset: The Family Farm Speaker: David Specht, Advising Generations LLC

9:30am Irrigation Seminar -Actual ET Measurements for Monitoring Water Stress and Simplifying Irrigation Speaker: Tom Shapland, Tule

10:00am Art Quilting Fashion Show Priscilla Girard, Springville Valley Oak Quilt Guild World Ag Women Pavilion

10:30am Dairy Seminar - Benefits and Limitations of Bunker Silos, and Silage Management to Avoid DM Losses Speaker: PhD. Brian Holmes, Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison PhD

10:30am Irrigation Seminar -Soil Moisture Research for Enhanced Irrigation Management Speaker: Will MacHugh, iFarmiFarm

11am Education Seminar -What Every Farmer Needs to Know about Lawsuit Protection, Tax Reduction, and Estate Planning Speaker: Larry Oxenham, American Society for Asset Protection

11am Cooking Demonstration Chef Jeff Riggs, Tulare Adult School Culinary Arts World Ag Women Pavilion

11:30am Dairy Seminar -Timely Diagnosis of Ketosis and Other Metabolic Diseases in Dairy Cows Speaker: Aurora Villarroel, Afimilk Ltd.

11:30am Irrigation Seminar -pH Modification in Irrigation Water Speaker: Jim Gregory, Verdegaal Brothers, Inc.

12:00pm Cooking Demonstration Chef David Vartanian, Vintage Press, Jack & Charlie's, The Southern Pacific Depot - Visalia World Ag Women Pavilion

12:30pm Apiology Seminar -MiteNot: Combating Colony Collapse Disorder by Treating Varroa Destructor Mites Speaker: Will MacHugh, iFarm

1pm Cooking Demonstration Chef Jonathon Perkins, Erna's Elderberry House - Oakhurst World Ag Women Pavilion

1:30pm Education Seminar – USDA National Appeals Division, "Face to Face Fairness" Speaker: Steve Silverman, NAD Director, & Michael Buchanan

1:30pm Dairy Seminar – Integrated Solutions and Dairy Automation Trends Over the Next 15 Years

2pm Gourd Growing and Painting Cecile Garrison, U.C. Master Gardener World Ag Women Pavilion

2:30pm General Ag Seminar - Technology Transfer and the USDA Ag Research Service Speaker: Mojdeh-Bahar, USDA ARS Office of Technology Transfer

2:30pm Dairy Seminar -Removal of Phosporus from Manure with Decanter Centrifuge Speaker: Joshua J. Gable, Centrisys

3pm Fashion Show World Ag Women Pavilion

3:30pm Dairy Seminar – How California Dairies Can Rise to the Call of the Water Crisis & The Future of Manure Management Speaker: Ross Thurston, Livestock Water Recycling

3:30pm General Ag Seminar -Grower Opportunities and Investment in the Rise of AgTechSpeaker: Aaron Mageheim, AgTech Insight

Wednesday, February 10

9:30am Women in Ag Seminar Women in Agriculture (Career Focus) Hosted by Women in Ag for Mentoring and Empowerment

10am Dairy Seminar - Maximizing the Value of Genetics in the Genomic Era Speaker: Kevin Jorgenson, All West Select Sires

10am International Seminar Compete, Win, and Expand Your Business

10am "Community Gardens" Veronica Sanchez, Woodlake World Ag Women Pavilion

10:30am Women in Ag Seminar Reaching a New Level of Consumer Understanding. Speaker: Sabrina Hill, AgNet West

11am Cooking Demonstration Chef Tommy Chavez, Café Tommy - Visalia World Ag Women Pavilion

11am Dairy Seminar - Full Throttle Genetic Improvement Speaker: Paul Loney, TransOva Genetics

11am International Seminar - The State of Global Business Opportunities: International Trade and World Markets

11:30am Women in Ag Networking Lunch with 'My Job Depends on Ag'

12pm Cooking Demonstration Chef Reagan Roach, Harris Ranch - Coalinga World Ag Women Pavilion

12pm Dairy Seminar - Genetics and RePro at RuAnn& Maddox Dairies: Achieving Goals Speaker: Pat Maddox, Ruann& Maddox Dairies '

1pm Cooking Demonstration Chef Karl Merten, Café 225 - Visalia World Ag Women Pavilion

1pm Dairy Seminar - The Impact of Genomics on Reproduction and Other Low Heritability Traits Speaker: Dr. Ralph Bruno, Zoetis '

1pm International Seminar - Emerging Markets Entrepreneurs Should Be Watching and How to Approach Them

2pm Dairy Seminar - Tools for Building Tomorrow's Super Cow Speaker: Lindsey Worden, Holstein Association USA

2pm Cooking Demonstration Chef Ben Martins, Cool Hand Luke's Steakhouse & Saloon - Tulare World Ag Women Pavilion

2pm International Seminar - Show Me the Money! Unraveling the Mysteries of Trade Finance

2pm Women in Ag Seminar - The Future of Ag

3pm Cooking Demonstration Chef Elaine Dakessian, Tres Bien – Visalia with Kyran Wiley World Ag Women Pavilion

4:30pm Budweiser After-Hours Party Opens

5pm Free Concert with Jon Pardi

Thursday, February 11

9am Dairy Seminar - Evaluation of a Biofilter Treating a San Joaquin Valley Dairy's Lagoon Water Speaker: Mai Ann Healy, BioFiltro USA, Inc. & Joe Mullinax, Denele Analytical, Inc. '

9:30am Women in Ag Seminar Students: Why You Need a Mentor and How to Find One

10am Dairy Seminar - Using Composting to Manage Manure and Improve the Bottom Line Speaker: Ryan Flaherty, Sustainable Conservation

10am Irrigation Seminar - Agriculture Activities of the Irrigation Association Speaker: John Farner, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources

10am 'Raising and Preserving Heritage Chickens' Brice Yocum, Sunbird Farms

10:30am Dairy Seminar - Drip Irrigation of Dairy Forage Crops Utilizing Dairy Effluent Speaker: Dennis Hannaford & Todd Rinkenberger, Netafim USE

10:30am Women in Ag Seminar Students: Types of Agriculture Careers

10:30am Irrigation Seminar - AirJection Irrigation Increasing Yields and Water Use Efficiency Speaker: John Petrosso, Mazzei Injector Company

11am Irrigation Seminar - Innovations in Sprinkler Packages for Mechanical Move Irrigation Systems Speaker: Dan Schueler, Senninger Irrigation

11:30am Women in Ag Mentor Lunch

11am Dining & Entertaining Tips

11:10am Dairy Seminar - Seen and Unseen Benefits of Strip-Till in California Dairy Forage Programs Speaker: Mike Peterson, ANP, Inc.

11:30am Irrigation Seminar - Increasing Demand Response Participation Rates in Agricultural Customers: Reducing Crop Irrigation-Related Risks During DR Events. Speaker: George McFadden, Observant

12pm Irrigation Seminar - Flow Control Emitters – Optimizing Both Flexibility and Uniformity Speaker: Inge Bisconer, Toro Micro-Irrigation

12pm Cooking Demonstration Chef Christian Raia, West Hills College Culinary Arts - Lemoore World Ag Women Pavilion

12pm Dairy Seminar - The Role of On-Farm Groundwater Recharge in Achieving a Sustainable Water Future for California Sponsored Lunch by the Almond Board of California Speakers: Bob Curtis, Almond Board of CA, Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch, & Daniel Mountjoy, Sustainable Conservation

12:30pm Irrigation Seminar - Reversing Yield Loss Through Restoration of Irrigation Efficiency Speaker: KiahTiftick, Meras Engineering

1pm Dairy Seminar - Financial Incentives for Agricultural Irrigation Systems in California Speakers: AmrithGunasekara, PhD., and Carolyn Cook, CDFA, & Crystal Myers and Sarah Weaver, Office of Grants Administration

1pm Irrigation Seminar - Understanding Soil Moisture Sensor Data Speaker: Diganta-Adhikari, Irrometer

1pm "All About the Base: Successful Succulents" Loral Avila-Thompson, College of the Sequoias-Visalia World Ag Women Pavilion

1:20pm Dairy Seminar - NRCS Conservation Programs to Assist Animal Feeding Operations Address Water Quality Issues Speaker: Brook Gale, NRCS-California State Nutrient Management

1:30pm Irrigation Seminar - Utilizing Soil Moisture Monitoring to Schedule Irrigation. Speaker: Christopher Sullivan, Jain Irrigation

2pm Dairy Seminar - Precision Irrigation & Conservation Agriculture Speaker: Jeff Mitchell, UC Davis Dept. of Plant Sciences

2pm Irrigation Seminar - Use of a Cloud-Based Data Management Utility with a Portable Soil Moisture Probe Speaker: Doug Kieffer, Spectrum Technologies

2pm Women in Ag Seminar Effective Lobbying for Agriculture

2pm "Baking with the Pros" Shelly Wade, Gourmet Desserts & Wedding Cakes by Shelly - Visalia World Ag Women Pavilion

2:30pm Irrigation Seminar - Keys to Constructing Efficient Ground Water Production Wells Speaker: Kevin McGillicuddy, Roscoe Moss Company

2:40pm Dairy Seminar - Seen and Unseen Benefits of Strip-Till in California Dairy Forage Programs Speaker: Mike Peterson, ANP, Inc.

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District 3

Continued from p. 1

crunch was mainly due to poor execution. They had the means, he said, but not the method.

"We have an $800 million budget," Cox said. He found many examples of managerial inefficiency when first elected, he said, such as the county's not having a single list of all the properties it owns, and has worked to correct the perceived deficiencies. "We're not poor."

Working with Youth

Cox also cited his work on youth programs as a source of pride, pointing to programs such as the Loop, a free transit system, and Step Up, an umbrella organization intended to coordinate and unite the efforts of various groups that work with the county's at-risk children.

"We've been instrumental in driving down juvenile crime," said Cox, who claims the programs have helped reduce the county's juvenile crime by 60%.

Keeping What We Earn

Cox' other focus will be assuring funding from Measure R, a local sales tax used to pay for transportation projects, doesn't get siphoned off by the state as it struggles to find sources of revenue.

"The state wants to hold onto a bigger piece. You're going to see more money going to Los Angeles and the Bay Area," he said. Keeping money flowing from state and federal sources into Tulare County is an area where Cox feels he excels, and has connections and experience. "You've got to know how to get creative. It's going to take people here, in Sacramento and Washington."

Cox Sticking Around

For supporter Thomas Forbes, it's Cox' focus on the county's youth, as well as his personal friendship, that makes him a supporter.

"I've known Phil a long time in this community, before he became a politician," Forbes said. "I really like how he supports the youth."

Stemming the area's brain-drain is perhaps a key component of building Tulare County's ability to create jobs and a more lively economy. And, for Forbes, it's personal.

"I've got young kids and want them to stay here," he said. "It's good to see someone local (Cox) who wants to stick around."

Sticking around is what Cox intends. Politics, he said, is now his career.

"After three or four years, I decided this is what I wanted to do," Cox said. "I have something to give."

'A Better Candidate'

Cox isn't the only local seeking the District 3 seat. Long-time Visalia City Councilwoman Amy Shuklian is also campaigning for the spot. She isn't shy about why voters should elect her to replace Cox.

"I'm a better candidate," she said. "I believe that I will be more engaged with the community, more accessible to citizens. There seems to not have been a lot of collaboration between the county and cities."

Shuklian points to her record as a council member as proof of her qualification for the job, particularly the open office hours she maintained and her continual outreach efforts.

"During the last eight years on the council, people know I'm a trustworthy decision maker," she said. "I can even do it more. There are issues I can address better. We've had some areas that need attention, such as Mooney Grove Park."

Employee Relations

Improving employee relations are also high on Shuklian's list of issues. The way the county has dealt with its workers-- it is currently suing a union representing county employees for conduct during contract negotiations--is counterproductive, she said.

"What does that do for the moral of the employees when your employers sue you after you have reached an agreement?" she asked.

She also has a problem with how supervisors, who are paid a full-time wage by the county, receive their raises.

"When you're elected, you're elected for four years, and if you do a good job, you get reelected. There should be a mechanism (for wage increases) based on the CPI (Cost Price Index) of the previous year," said Shuklian. "What gets me is anytime an elected official gets a raise, the supervisors get a quarter of that amount. If they give the sheriff a 4% raise, they get a 1% raise. That's just flat wrong."

Shuklian said she would also like to focus on improving the county's efforts at recharging the area's ground water and in improving its image. She also believes change may be good just for change's sake.

"It's time for change. We need a new perspective and some new energy," she said. "Folks can get complacent."

The field for the District 3 race could widen. The filing period of intended candidates ends Thursday, March 11.

Supervisor Cox said that he just hired political finance director, Evette Bakke, last week and his fundraising efforts will begin in earnest in a few weeks. He has three or four fundraiser scheduled for the end of February and several more for March.

Shuklian Campaign Claims Domination of District 3 Race

Special from Shuklian Campaign

Visalia City Councilmember and candidate for Tulare County Board of Supervisors in District 3, Amy Shuklian, announced today that she has raised a total of $30,197.00 during the last fundraising quarter. This is more than seven times what the current incumbent raised. Moreover, Shuklian has $20,604.98 cash on hand as opposed to the incumbent who is significantly behind with only $6,068.44 with a four- year head start.

These numbers clearly show that residents in District 3 believe it's time for a change. "Since day one, bringing the community together to tackle the challenges facing our county, regardless of party affiliation, has been the forefront of my campaign," Amy Shuklian said. "My campaign team and I have a lot of work ahead of us, but the support shown by my fundraising efforts is a clear indicator that District 3 wants new leadership."

The Amy Shuklian for Tulare County Supervisor 2016 campaign has several fundraising events planned in the upcoming weeks. These events will keep the campaign budget well within reaching its fundraising goal and keep those involved in Shuklian's campaign, working hard toward a victory in the June 2016 primary.

For more information about Amy Shuklian for Tulare County Supervisor 2016 campaign, visit AmyForSupervisor.com or call

Huerta

Continued from p. 1

Central Committee (TCDCC) meeting. Members of the Chavez family form part of his core campaign committee.

From the time Huerta was eight years old he accompanied his mother in the family van on marches and protests to fight for agriculture laborers rights. His childhood experiences played a large role in his becoming a lawyer to defend workers rights. "I've spent my life defending the rights of trade unions and I want to use those same values while representing the 21st District."

Huerta's strategy is to embark on an extensive ground game from Firebaugh to East Bakersfield. The district encompasses all of Kings and parts of Tulare, Fresno and Kern Counties. Huerta's campaign team intends on going door to door in the small rural communities such as Arvin, Lamont, Delano, Mendota, and Huron to name a few. Huerta has organized his ground game before his fundraising machine because he feels that is how Democrats can win back the district and keep it.

His strategy is to do an aggressive voter registration drive, and encourage Hispanics to mail in their absentee ballots if they can't make it to the ballot box. The TCDCC recognizes that the biggest problem with the 21st Congressional District is getting Democrats to show up and vote during an election.

Huerta emphasized that this was going to be "a very expensive race and will need everyone's help." As of September of last year, Rep. Valaldao had $770,000 on hand versus Democrat Daniel Parra, who only has $10,000. Parra declared last spring his candidacy for the 21st Congressional District and is currently the mayor of Fowler. Parra's lack of fundraising skills prompted the Democrat party to look for another viable candidate in Huerta.

Congressional District 21 is portrayed as the most vulnerable district in California, but that distinction has so far only existed on paper. Democrats hold a 16% voter registration advantage, but Rep. Valadao has won two elections by a landslide, the last one against a very well funded opponent, Amanda Renteria. The Valadao campaign has already jumped on the fact that Huerta is an outsider that was handpicked by Washington DC Democrats. That claim is based on the fact that Huerta does not live in the district and that Democrats had to come up with an alternative to Parra's anemic performance. Huerta says that he grew up in Delano and his life's work has been helping the small rural communities that make up the 21st district. It is not requirement to live in the congressional district you represent and Huerta lives just outside the 21st district in West Bakersfield.

During Huerta's introduction speech he linked the politics of Rep. Valadao to that of Republican Presidential Nominee Donald Trump. He said that when Trump called for closing the border or called immigrants from Mexico as rapist, drug dealers, and thieves that Rep. Valadao remained silent implicating his complicity. But Rep. Valadao has consistently sponsored and voted for immigration reform. If Trump gets the Republican nomination Valadao's support for immigration reform won't matter. It is projected that Democratic voter turnout will break all records and many Republican seats will be lost.

Ballot Measure

Continued from p. 1

public opinion research firm, FM3. Their representative, Richard Bernard, has conducted several surveys for Visalia in the past years. During his presentation to the city council, Bernard said that the city never fails to impress. "You really are the Jewel of the Valley." Bernard has surveyed many cities in California and said that Visalia ranks high as one of the best run. He also complimented the BCAC for a job well done and said that they served their city well.

The survey Interviewed 500 City of Visalia registered voters who were likely to vote in the November 2016 General Election. The survey found that "slightly more than two-thirds think the city has a great or some need for additional funds." FM3's report also added that, "there appears to be support for the ½-cent sales tax measure above the 50% +1 vote threshold." The report said that after the respondents were educated on the issues facing Visalia, the percent of voters went up six points in favor of the half cent tax hike.

Based on the survey results, Bernard reported that his company recommended that the City Council move forward with the ballot measure.

The next step is for city staff to develop the language that will appear on the ballot measure. The city council will be reviewing a first draft of the measure at its next meeting Tuesday, February 16th.

Deadline Extended for Mid Kaweah GSA Committee

Staff Reports

The Mid-Kaweah GSA is seeking citizens who are interested in serving on the Advisory Committee and the application deadline has been extended to Tuesday, March 1st at 5pm. Individuals who are residents or associated with a business in the Mid-Kaweah area and who want to get involved in how our community utilizes and preserves groundwater resources are sought. For more information, contact Michelle Nicholson, City of Visalia Chief Deputy City Clerk at (559) 713-4512 or at Michelle.Nicholson@visalia.city.

February is Grand Jury Awareness Month

Applications may be completed on line by accessing http://tularecounty.ca.gov/grandjury/ Deadline for submission of applications is April 15, 2016.

Ennis Gives State of Tulare County Address

Catherine Doe

On January 26 Tulare County Board of Supervisors' Chairman Mike Ennis presented the State of the County Address.

Ennis reiterated before he started the address that because of the collaboration and dedication of the current board that the county was able to remain fiscally sound, and that they will keep it that way in the years to come.

2015 HELD MANY CHALLENGES

2015 held many challenges for California and Tulare County was no exception. According to Ennis, the biggest challenge of 2015 was the fact that Tulare County was ground zero for the drought.

As one of 2015's accomplishments Ennis said that the county obtained grants to drill a new well right outside of Porterville. The drilling started in August and is now complete and almost ready to go on-line.

In addition, the County Office of Emergency Services was successful in establishing the Household Bottled Water Program which has approved deliveries to 1,551 households to date, and the Water Tank Program that provides tanks to residents whose wells have gone dry.Ennis thanked the City of Porterville, United Way, CSET and Self-Help Enterprises for helping the County install the tanks and procure the water

The County established the Parks Advisory Committee in order to receive input from citizens to improvement the county's 10 parks and improvements have already been made. Step Up continues to empower the county's youth to stay out of gangs with the Summer Night Lights Program expanding to include more communities.

The Tulare County Film and Tourism Commission permitted a total of $2.8 million in overall film production projects last fiscal year.

One of the biggest projects for the Film and Tourism Commission this year has been a Virtual Reality series filmed for Samsung to promote their new Android phone and Virtual Reality gear. The Commission is also getting ready to market Tulare County filming opportunities at the upcoming Oscars.

GOALS FOR 2016

Ennis started with public safety when talking about the county's goals for 2016. The purchase of body cameras for all patrol officers will continue to take the County to the next level of state of the art law enforcement technology.

The sheriff's department will add a second airplane that will be used for search and rescue, pot eradication and to support our deputies on the ground.

A new prison is being built in Porterville and is scheduled to break ground in February of this year.

Once this facility is operational, it will help cut the costs of transporting prisoners from Bob Wiley and the Main Jail to the new justice center.

The Tulare County Library will continue to increase access to literacy services, resources and programs for adults.

TCAG will implement a transit discount program for both active and retired military personnel in March of 2016. TCAG will also be widening a portion of Highway 65 and improving the Betty Drive interchange. In all, our Resource Management Agency intends to complete $2.5 million in community based road improvements,

In addition to the departmental goals, there are other countywide goals and projects Ennis mentioned.

The Water Resources Program Manager, Denise England, will continue to work with our local water agencies to implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act by forming Groundwater Sustainability Agencies and begin formulating Groundwater Sustainability Plans for each of Tulare County's three critically over drafted sub-basins.

Ennis included in his comments about water, "We have worked diligently with our local water agencies to move the Lake Success Enlargement Project forward. This is an important project for local water supply reliability, flexibility, and flood protection for our communities. After several years of storage restrictions and delays while our federal partners completed studies, we now can use the lake at full capacity once again. In order to increase the pool and, local storage potential, our final obstacle is addressing possible overtopping risk by potentially widening the spillway. The partnering agencies will be working to continue the momentum."

The Board of Supervisors will continue to meet with the Tule River Tribal Council on an annual basis, strengthening our communication and collaboration on the needs of both the County and the Reservation.

Another challenge for 2016, will be the fire risk. Due to lack of significant progress and pressure from environmental groups, the county was unable to complete the tree thinning necessary to reduce the risk of losing trees in our forests as seen with the rough fire. Having too many trees per acre combined with the lack of water due to the drought has severely affected the health of the trees, leaving us with 29 million dead trees statewide.

Ennis stated, "Tulare County was one of the first in the California to draw attention to this issue at the State and Federal levels. One of the main reasons we are concerned is that over half of our county is federal land. The last fire season had significant implications, and future fires due to large amount of dead trees could easily endanger our Giant Sequoia groves."

IN CLOSING

Ennis finished his State of the County address by saying, "There's no doubt there will be challenges in 2016. We will continue to watch for changes from the state and how they will handle medical marijuana enforcement. We will continue to monitor the drought and work with our communities to help ensure that the future water needs of our residents are met. As a Board, we will continue to do whatever it takes to keep this county fiscally sound. I look forward to working with everyone and the Board as your chair in 2016."

Macareno Gets 100% of Pre-Endorsement Votes for CA Dem Endorsement

The California Democratic Party held a pre-conference meeting on January 30 to endorse candidates running for state and federal office.

Ruben Macareno's election campaign for the 26th State Assembly District announced that it has confirmed support of state delegates who submitted all its ballots in favor of their candidate for the state party endorsement.

"I thank the delegates for their support," said Macareno, who is also the chairman of the Tulare County Democratic Party. "I stand on the principles of the party proudly. I also believe in the basic rules of representation that all voices in a community are valuable as they are important in addressing local and state issues. We need to work together at the end of this election cycle." In the 2014 Assembly race Macareno and two other Democrats ran in a field of seven candidates for the assembly seat. He was one vote from receiving 70% of ballots received for state endorsement. As a result, no Democrat made it into the general election which pits the top two vote getters despite of party affliation.

According to the by-laws by the California Democratic Party, candidates must receive at least 70% of support from the district's delegates at the "pre-convention endorsement caucus" to secure an endorsement prior to the party's annual convention.

The "pre-convention endorsement caucus" is comprised of California Democratic Party State Central Committee delegates who vote at the state convention, as well as the county's central committee and district-based club appointed Democratic Party delegates. Once ballots are cast, they cannot be revoked, changed or rescinded.

At convention, all candidate recommendations are added to the California Democratic Party's consent calendar for simple ratification.

Park Advisory Committee Moves Forward on TNR and Smoking Ordinance

The January 26 Park Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held in the auditorium of the Farm Labor and Agriculture Museum.

According to John Hess, Tulare County Administrative Analyst, the committee decided that Trap, Neuter & Release (TNR) would be the most "humane and cost effective way to maintain the cat population at Mooney Grove."

He added that the staff compiled information on programs throughout the state that have worked on controlling cat populations, and that lead to their decision to implement TNR. County Administrative Officer, Mike Spata, met with Hess and the Visalia Feral Cat Coalition (VFCC) and told them to proceed to put together a program that will accommodate the county's needs and the needs of Mooney Grove.

The VFCC will be working out the details of the program, such as a feeding protocol and who will be in charge. The volunteers will also be required to wear identification badges. A final document will be approved at the next PAC meeting on Wednesday, February 24. PAC then plans on presenting their program to the Tulare County Board of Supervisors (TCBOS)for approval at their March 15 regular meeting.

PAC also decided to follow Visalia's lead in terms of a smoking ordinance. The City of Visalia voted to put up signs asking park goers not to smoke in certain areas instead of approving a hard ordinance.

The Tulare County Health Committee said they would work with PAC to implement the new smoking ban and will be conducting an evaluation to see if the signs work.

Cutler and Mooney Grove Parks will start charging for entrance in March, and that is when the Health Committee will start their evaluation.

The committee will keep a tally of how many people use the park and then put the signs up in June. The following year they will come back to the parks and ask the park users if the signs requesting no smoking worked.

A member of the PAC committee resigned for personal reasons from district 4. The current vacancy is for a position to be selected by the District 4 County Supervisor and would end in June of 2019.

Applicants need not live within District 4 to apply. Applications will be reviewed and presented to the Board of Supervisors for appointment.

Applications may be picked at the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at 2800 W. Burrel Ave, Visalia, CA 93291; or online at http://tularecounty.ca.gov/clerkoftheboard/index.cfm/board-commissions-and-committee/.

In regard to the well situation in Mooney Grove, Neil Pilegard, Tulare County Park and Recreation Manager, said that it is a matter of weeks--not months--before the new well will be operational.

After the meeting, Pilegard lead the group on a tour of Mooney Grove, where he pointed out the new well and showed the committee members the maintenance workers' efforts to clean the pond. Mooney Grove looked much better than it did a few months ago, as the goose poop had been cleaned up and many of the broken picnic tables had been repaired.

The next PAC meeting will be at Cutler Park in the maintenance building on February 24 at 3pm.

Voices of the Valley

Lester Moon

Jan M. Krafve

There are many people in this world who make a positive difference in the place where they live. Sometimes it is with intent and other times it 's merely the wake they leave as they pass through doors by leaving them open for others to follow. Most times the two go hand in hand.

The room may feel a little brighter, or the mood may become a little more cheerful when they walk in. Such is the case with Lester Moon. As founder and executive director of "Hands in the Community," he has touched the lives of many residents who live in Tulare and Kings Counties. Since the inception this non-profit organization in 2008, many special needs of the elderly and poverty stricken have been filled. This is the story of why "Hands in the Community" was created; it is the story of Lester Moon.

It was without trepidation that he began to tell his story

"I grew up in the Adirondack Mountains in the little town of Lake George. The population had less than 2,000 people. I lived at the end of town, in a two-room house, without any electricity, without running water, and an outhouse for our bathroom. It snowed a lot where I lived and I only had one pair of shoes, and they were for school. I didn't have sneakers in the summertime, I just ran around barefoot."

He continued to talk about his childhood.

"We were on the receiving end of charitable baskets brought to our home at Thanksgiving time. They would come back at Christmas and bring presents for the entire family, that is, the churches and some of the local residents. Other than what my grandparents gave us, these were the only Christmas gifts we had.

"At one time in my life, I remember feeling really blessed. The people who were so kind to us never asked us for anything back; they didn't require anything from us. They just gave without expectation because our family was poor.

"Education was tremendously important since my father never made it past the third grade and my mother left school before starting junior high. My parents divorced when I was 12, so I lived with my grandparents for a couple of years. I entered Job Corp and left that program, so at age 14 I was basically on my own.

"I was in and out of foster care, but at age 19, the county gave me the check and told me to get my own place to live. I had previously quit high school, so I returned and got my diploma. I was a much better student this time. It was the school guidance counselor who persuaded me to go on to college. I was accepted everywhere I applied so I chose one of the state colleges near home."

Moon talked about his first experience with the higher education system.

"I really didn't apply myself to my studies at State University. I was having too much fun. I was kind of a BMOC (Big Man On Campus) and involved in a lot social activities. Even though I was editor of the school newspaper, the dean called me in and informed me that perhaps I should take a leave of absence from my studies. So I left and went back to junior college and graduated with a 4.0 GPA and an AA in Business."

Lester Moon is the founder and executive director of "Hands in the Community."

When asked how he supported himself, Moon responded, "I worked for an Elder at the church I attended who owned a restaurant. I sometimes wouldn't have had a hot meal if it weren't for my job. I lived in a rented room and used to cook on a hot plate. I would even keep the milk outside my window at night so it was cold in the morning for my cereal at breakfast."

Moon went on to reflect about how came to enroll at Cornell University.

"The restaurant owner who I worked for wrote a fabulous letter of reference for me and urged me to continue my education. I didn't really know what I wanted to do, so I took his suggestion and applied at two major universities. Once again, I was accepted at both, so I had my choice. I decided on attending Cornell instead of Syracuse. That's where I received my Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial and Labor Relations.

"By the time I graduated from Cornell, I still had never been on a plane. So when I flew to California for an interview, I was awestruck. I was put up at the best hotel in Palo Alto, and wined and dined by the company that recruited me. The sunset on the California beach was amazing. That was almost 40 years ago. I can remember playing volleyball on the warm, sunny beach one afternoon and then be snow skiing at Squaw Valley the next day. You get spoiled. I guess that's why I never left California."

When Moon got married and had children, things changed. He worked from sunrise to sunset and found that he didn't have time to enjoy his family as much as he desired.

"I wanted more than early evenings with them, but the commute to work and back alone was more than three hours a day. I would get up before the kids and come home when they were getting ready for bed. What kind of life is that?" exclaimed Moon.

When the recession hit, he started the first Love Inc. in San Mateo County.

Moon explained, "I was the founder and executive director of this chapter. It was the fastest growing Love Inc. on the West Coast. I was the mentoring affiliate of all the other chapters that wanted to start their own Love Inc. in our region. Back then it was part of World Vision. It was a Christian non-profit program that helped people who were falling through the cracks. We provided service through volunteers who went out and helped people in the community. This is very much like what Hands in the Community is doing today.

"Being in business, having been a business major in college, you know how to put things and people together. When you do recruiting, you find the need and fill it with the right individual. This is the formula used to create Hands in the Community.

"Our vision is to expand our services and to provide a network of resources to anyone in need. By assisting families, we can make a difference in someone's life and in the entire community, by sharing the love of Christ through our volunteers," explained Moon.

When asked how Hands in the Community gets its volunteers and funding, Moon said, "We grow our database for both of them through contacts we make in the community. I am forever grateful to the many individuals, churches, service clubs and especially the local businesses and corporate partners that provide for Hands in the Community and support its mission.

> *"From the simplest of fixes, like a burnt-out light bulb, to providing for people who have lost everything when burned out of their homes by fire, we will be there to help fill the needs of our neighbors."*
>
> Lester Moon

He went on further to say, "Hands in the Community does a lot of community events to raise funds. The first year we had a dinner as our only fundraiser. The following year we added a concert and then the next year we added a golf tournament to our event calendar. This last year we participated for the first time in Visalia's Christmas Tree Auction. Now we're up to four major fundraising events annually."

Moon then discussed how the funds were spent.

"Even though we're non-profit, we still have to pay the rent for the office, the utilities, the internet, the telephone and all other business-related expenses. I'm the only full-time, paid person. We also have a paid part-time office manager; she works 12 hours a week. Any of the other staff are all volunteers.

"We may get a call at our offices from a person who needs to go to the doctor, and we find a volunteer willing to take them. If an elderly couple needs their yard cleaned, we contact the church youth group, a local business, or a service club that are willing to go, as a group, to the couple's home and clean up the yard."

When asked how people in need find out about their program, he smiled and said, "We don't have a problem with people finding us. The more we do in the community, the more the word gets out. We've been featured in many local magazines and newspapers and I do radio and television interviews as well. We participate in many of the local chamber functions and community events each year. However, word of mouth provides us with a lot of new clients. We probably get the most new referrals from someone telling another person what we did for them."

He was quick to add that they screen all requests by verifying that those in need are at the poverty level or have an extreme circumstance.

Moon has been doing work with non-profit organizations for nearly 30 years now. He considers it to be his ministry in life. It is his grateful feelings about what others did for his family when growing up that feeds his passion for giving to others today.

Moon tells one of his favorite stories, "An elderly woman called to tell us that her house was dark. The volunteer who answered the phone first asked her if she had paid her utility bill. She said she had, so he asked if there was something wrong in the breaker box. She said that wasn't the problem either. The volunteer found out that she was 81 years old. She lived in a little 850 sq. ft. house that had five rooms inside. In the middle of each room was a wire that hung with one light bulb attached. When the first room's light bulb burned out, she migrated to the next room, and the next room, until she had only one room left with light. She didn't belong to any church or service club, and her family lived over 250 miles away. She also didn't trust any of her neighbors, so she called us.

"After finding out that her need was legitimate, we found a volunteer to purchase the four light bulbs and go out to her home to replace them. Late in the afternoon we got a call from her and she was sobbing. The same volunteer asked her what was wrong. Didn't the volunteer show up and help her? She told us that he had just left. So the volunteer then asked her why she was crying. That's when she told us that she was so grateful because he had given her back her home and her life.

"This is what Hands in the Community is all about. From the simplest of fixes, like a burnt-out light bulb, to providing for people who have lost everything when burned out of their homes by fire, we will be there to help fill the needs of our neighbors."

For more information about Hands in the Community, call (559) 625-3822, or visit www.hnconline.org.

Viewpoint

Career Technical Education Continues to Evolve

Todd Oto, Ed.D., Superintendent

Four years ago, Superintendent Craig Wheaton authored an article titled, "Not your Dad's Shop Class!" At that time, he outlined how career technical education programs (what we used to call "vocational" or "shop" programs) had grown to be more relevant for students and our local community. Since that article, career technical education has been the focus of some extraordinary activity, and that focus has had great impact on the options available to students in Visalia.

Since 2012, a revolution of sorts has occurred within career technical education (CTE) at the state and federal level. The changes that have occurred have taken two forms. First, there is greater emphasis than ever on providing students a well-rounded education that contains a CTE component.

You may have heard the phrase, "college and career ready" to describe the expectations for graduates in the 21st century. This means that every high school graduate must possess skills that provide them with the ability to enter the workforce in a field that offers the potential for promotion, or to enter an educational program (meaning an advanced training program or college) without need for remediation. Second, support for CTE programs has grown dramatically through increases in school funding and also targeted grants. This allows for the support, expansion, and development of courses that prepare students to be college and career ready.

In Visalia Unified, we have been able to take advantage of both of these developments in powerful ways. We have been very competitive in the CTE grant arena. As a member of the Tulare-Kings County Linked Learning Consortium, we were able to receive two grants through the California Career Pathways Trust.

The first grant allows us to create our 10 Linked Learning Academies. These academies provide career-themed high school programs that combine core academic and CTE programs for cohorts of 60 to 120 students each.As I write this, eighth-grade students across our district are being offered the opportunity to take part in a Linked Learning Academy during their high school years.

The second grant allows us to redesign and support our existing traditional CTE pathways to ensure that students who engage in these programs receive experiences that are relevant to their needs and interests, and that are also validated by local industry. Further, we have been successful in obtaining a Career Technical Education Incentive Grant that will be used to modernize our CTE facilities and programs, further supporting our overall CTE program.

Visalia Unified has a long history of supporting career technical education. As a CTE instructor, I came to Visalia in the 1980's because of the strong programs offered in this district. It is exciting to know that we are able to provide strong, improved, and modern programs well into the 21st century that follow the traditional CTE pathways as well as innovative approaches to CTE through our Linked Learning Academies. The future is bright indeed for providing our students with an education that supports college and career readiness.

Pre-deciding About Violence

by Elizabeth Traubman, BA, MSW and Lionel Traubman, DDS, MSD

As loving parents who raised two children during the era of the Vietnam War, we were inspired by the work of child psychologist Haim Ginott who observed: "Misbehavior and punishment are not opposites that cancel each other. On the contrary, they breed and reinforce each other."

We asked ourselves: Is it possible that spanking – smacking, some say – has a ripple effect into our community and inter-nationally? And so we challenged two rarely questioned, often-implemented axioms of our times:

Violence is a good way to get what you want.

You can end violence with violence.

Surprisingly, both behaviors remain popular in our culture. A recent ABC News poll suggests that half of American parents still spank their children. Political policy makers are leading the charge, despite a growing mountain of proof that these ideas are obsolete — still used, but replaced by better ways.

We were so impressed by Haim Ginott's work and a growing body of supporting research that in disciplining our daughter and son we challenged ourselves to rule out spanking. Pre-deciding "no" to physical punishment threw us into sometimes feverish searching for alternatives to improve behavior and keep our daughter and son safe. Doubtful at first, we kept discovering creative, nonviolent alternatives that worked and kept us and our kids together and (mostly) behaving our best. We soon realized that rejecting violence was possible, do-able in real life, and desirable.

Pre-deciding about violence, beginning at home and then rippling out globally, is the most urgent need of our time. It is our best hope in this era of widespread atomic, biological, and chemical weapons when even a few people can do a lot of harm. Whether with physical punishment or all-out war, the stunning paradox of our time is that rejecting violence and dignifying our adversary – not humiliating, harming, or excluding – is the response that gets the best results.

What does smacking your child have in common with the fast-spreading violence we read about in headlines from every continent like terrorist attacks in Paris, Beirut, and Jerusalem, and drone strikes that kill innocent women and children?

They all are part of the cycle of cruelty. Yet as today's headlines clarify for us, violence primarily fuels more flames of hostility.

Take the case of the war on terrorism. One pilot who directed drone strike assassinations of terrorist leaders – which often kill innocent woman and children – admitted: "We kill four and create 10 [new terrorists]."

Whose idea was it that the best way to fight terrorism is to create more terrorists? And how have they been so successful at selling this idea?

The mathematics of violence is simple: The cycle grows exponentially, like pouring gasoline on a fire. The more violence you dish out, the more you get back.

If this is true on the battlefield, how true is it in neighborhoods and homes?

Interestingly, Mahatma Gandhi said that subtle forms of violence are actually the most dangerous, because they are unquestioned by society, everywhere on Earth, and never ending.

Research clarifies that parental use of physical punishment is often copied from the authorities who raised us. By imitation, we learn violence from childhood.

Today child, spouse, neighbor, and "other" abuse – sometimes justified as retaliation or self-defense – dominates the evening news. Smacking-to-teach may be justified, yet few parents deny having hit harder than intended out of rage or fear. More abusive treatment easily follows. Now realizing this at-home cause-and-effect makes seemingly small family choices about punishment matter a lot more for humankind's future together. In today's violent world, we parents matter more than ever.

Dr. Ginott reminds us that it is neither passivity nor punishment, but mutual empathy that is the foundation of effective parenting and family health. Pre-deciding to master listening and become an artisan of communication best helps parents relate to their children in an understanding way that improves behavior and dignifies everyone without diminishing parental authority.

That's why it is always the right time to reject corporal punishment. Discipline without hitting is easier for both parent and child, especially if hitting was never used earlier or at all. This practice makes better communicators of the whole family, and parents become better teachers for their children by responding creatively – and nonviolently – to their own anger and fear.

What is true on the micro-level of the family unit is equally as true on the macro-level of international relations. To prevent war, one must pre-decide. In the midst of the blazing fire, it is too late to get the oily rags out of the garage. Amid chaos and anxiety about real or imagined threats, it is too late to decide against the primitive, violent act of war. In fear, our brains do not even work correctly, save to rationalize old thinking and cruel acts that destroy life and relationships. The creative possibility is not available – eclipsed by our visceral, reptilian reactions.

Consultant Lisa McLeod notes that we often agonize over non-critical, material decisions that affect our lives very little: hair styles, paint colors, car purchases, eyeglass frames. Yet when it comes to behavioral decisions and responses to more critical events including life-and-death crises, "people often just react."

Gergana Sabeva Yordanova's extraordinary doctoral research, *Effects of the Pre-Decision Stage of Decision Making on the Self-Regulation of Behavior*, affirms the importance of pre-decision in our lives. Without it, a lack of self-regulation gives way to virtually every problem of our society – emotions and impulses that lead to money mismanagement, compulsive eating, greed, alcohol and drug addiction, abusive behavior, and ceaseless violence.

Our thirty-five years of facilitating serious adversaries internationally in a healing and peacebuilding process continues to strongly validate how a new path toward reconciliation works with very diverse people who pre-choose to decline aggression in favor of sitting down face-to-face. The new experience of listening-to-learn and being heard – we call it Authentic Dialogue – allows antagonists around the world to experience this dependable and transformative truth: "An enemy is one whose story we have not heard."

As with our children and Dr. Ginott's prescription of empathic communication, the pre-intention to engage in Authentic Dialogue enables so-called enemies to feel less isolated, hopeless, or desperate. Rather than being swept downstream in a flood of violence and bloodshed, they discover that they have more eloquent options.

This is the face-to-face entry point to life beyond war. We've experienced it facilitating and mentoring citizen-driven engagement for Soviets and Americans, Palestinians and Israelis, Armenians and Azerbaijanis, and most recently Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, adversaries in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and once-warring tribes in Cote d'Ivoire. Authentic Dialogue – the technique of listening-to-learn and being heard – time and again delivers seemingly miraculous results.

The daily brutality in the news headlines is proof: We are pushing the violence button too quickly and too often. The evidence favors that we choose "communicating with" not "battling against." Pre-choosing Authentic Dialogue has served our parenting and enabled many sworn adversaries we've watched create their new life together – beyond war.

McLeod's prescription may be the urgently needed preventive and cure, not only at home but among nations: "The pre-decision… gives you a tool for making decisions as your best self, so when the worst day happens you've already decided how you want to react."

Being one's best self at home and also among nations often works a small miracle. And sometimes a great one.

Elizabeth "Libby" Traubman *is a retired clinical social worker and co-founder of the 23-year-old Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue.* ***Lionel "Len" Traubman*** *retired after 38 years from his San Francisco practice of pediatric dentistry.*

Comments & Letters

The comments below are from "Former Long-Time Grace Homes Employee Sues the Ministry" and "CEO of Grace Homes Responds to Complaint of Sexual Harassment"

"i lived at grace homes and i hated it. i would rather be in juvi then living there. rosemary and sherri where the worse. sherri and leanne i heard say the n word before and sherri and rosemary talked down to us and even hit kids. liz was really mean to. we had to clean and stay in the house all the time like we were in jail liz and marline would make us clean the vans or we could not watch tv. we could not go to the doctor when we needed and we never got any money or clothes. i hate living there. it was years ago but i heard that when i left it got even worse. i would beg for things and never get them. they got over 7000 for me every month and they never bought me nothing. girls with babies would be sad becuase the babies never got things they needed for a long time. it was a nightmare i was so happy when i went to juvi it was better then gh. some of the staff was nice like adrine and debbie but i hated the other people. they made me feel like they didn't want me there. we did not get to go to school we had to go sit at the building on campus they call school and the staff just sat around deserae and tifany would be on the phone all the time. we just sat there and played cards every day for hours i hope they make the kuns pay for using the girls they had living there."

— Amy

"i cant help but be personally offended with the statement that the kuns never cared for us girls. that is not true . they do to love every last one of us .its not fair to judge people. if you wernt there when the sexual harrassment happened how can you say she is crying wolf. its her word against his .the kuns are very God fearing and respectable people and knowing this family for over twenty years i have never had to question their honesty or integrity. and it doesnt make sense that they are mad cause they cant get what they want. mr luna was hired because gale and glenda wanted to retire. what they wanted was staff they could trust."

— robin

"Robin, I was staff at Grace Homes when you and your son were placed there and returned as staff several times until 2013. Things changed there. Clients no longer received a monthly allowance for clothing. Instead, they were given clothes from the 'Grace Mart', in which the majority of clothing were either recycled from previous clients or donated to the program. I have, on occasion witnessed where administration had gone to the extreme in trying to charge clients for diapers that had been donated to the program, once their 'allotted' number of diapers had been used. Unless the placement agency demanded receipts for the monies allotted in the form of an annual clothing allotment, the clients did not actually receive the clothing in addition to their normal 'clothing needs'. The administration developed a clothing inventory sheet which was filled out monthly by staff and then signed by both staff and client. Clients rarely received any clothing additional to what their 'needs' were (as determined/defined by Grace Homes administration). Annual trips, as you mention had (prior to Mr. Luna becoming administrator) become a thing-of-the-past. I could provide numerous examples of how clients were encouraged to raise the funds to finance such trips as you have mentioned. Gone were the days were the lead staff could take clients out shopping, or to have a meal out at a restaurant to acknowledge and celebrate the combined efforts of the clients having had achieved their levels. I refrained in participating in the 'Christmas Hands' for clients after having experienced that the items that I purchased for the client were given to another (more worthy) client. I have been given first-hand accounts from colleagues who never did see items that they had purchased present on evenings when the clients and their children opened their gifts. I have helped organized various activities and arts and crafts projects. I am not the only staff that found it to be rather frustrating that getting even the most basic supplies for activities was like pulling teeth. In the most recent years that I can recall, staff donated their time to come in and help wrap gifts for the clients. While birthdays were once celebrated with cake and ice cream (and often other various refreshments as organized by the house staff) and a monetary gift, this has not been the case for nearly the past decade. I honestly do not remember the last graduation or sober birthday celebration given in honor of the achievements of the clients, at Grace Homes.

There was a time when, during the Christmas season, staff were shown that they were appreciated through generous bonuses. My final Christmas bonus consisted of a $10 gift certificate that was never even given to me (or a number of my colleagues), as they were collected by an individual within administration before they could be given out to us.

This Robin, is the reality of what Grace Homes had evolved into. Your perspective on Grace Homes is based entirely on your experiences, while placed at the Grace Homes over 18 years ago. The Kuns' were 'gifted' with a remarkable program and the ideal facilities to continue in this ministry, in which I know that Mrs. Kuns once possessed a great passion for. While I have admired the Kuns' on many accounts, I am saddened that the Grace Homes has become, in which has resulted in the Kuns' being prohibited from the Grace Homes property.

The Kuns' have provided me with the opportunity to work with the youth placed within their care. Having worked with this population of youth, I have been inspired to continue in my education and I look forward to working with at-risk youth on a therapeutic level.

In closing, I give my regards to the new administration. It could not have been easy to transition into this position, considering the issues and obstacles at hand. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my former colleagues as well as the clients [both male and female] that I have had the privilege to work with. I have acquired a wealth of education, information and training from each of you, equally."

— Former Staff

"Enough blame already, where is the responsibility?

People don't cry "sexual harassment," without having their eyes on reparations in the form of a cash payout. I'm not implying Mr. Luna sexually harassed anyone, I don't know. This forum is not an ideal place to establish facts, however, is is a great way to influence (manipulate) public opinion.

In the most recent publication (1/21/16), third paragraph, Mr. Luna stated, "it would have been physically impossible" for him to have assaulted Sherrie Kuns-Fehlman because they were "never in the same place at the same time." "Never" means at no time in the past or future; on no occasion; not ever. In the next sentence of that same paragraph, Mr. Luna stated that "he was in fact in the same room at the same time" when being introduced to her in her parent's front room. As a teenager, I recall inviting a boy home to meet my parents. After the meeting we were walking out as my parents were resigning to the kitchen. In that brief moment, my date reached and grabbed my bottom without my parents even noticing. These things are rarely "physically impossible."

Later, the same article tells the reader, "The Committee notes that both Fehlman and Luna were present at the May 11, 2015 meeting." Are the board meeting minutes inaccurate or flawed, or is Mr. Luna just a poor historian? Maybe Mr. Luna's definition of the word "never" is different from mine. Too much inconsistency already, which casts significant doubt in my mind. It makes me wonder what else is getting a little blurry, obscured, or swept under the rug. Again, as a reader, I simply do not know.

Regarding the investigation of Mr. Luna by the board of directors; they may as well have asked his mommy to investigate him. Of course there would be no finding of guilt. The bias is too strong and objectivity is a wishful illusion. One hand is washing the other and they are connected to the same dysfunctional body. Does the board of directors not know their responsibility? Fiduciary duty requires board members to stay objective, unselfish, responsible, honest, trustworthy, and efficient. Board members, as stewards of public trust, must never act for the benefit of themselves. It appears the board may not have met its responsibility because members should have excused themselves and opted for an independent investigation to guarantee objectivity and neutrality. They did not and it appears they acted in their own interest as they began circling the wagons.

The most recent article states that the committee found Sherrie Kuns-Fehlmen's allegations of sexual harassment dubious (read hesitant, doubting, not reliable, suspect) because she did not report them right away. The committee found that the board of directors of Grace Homes did not learn of this allegation until July 10, 2015, nearly seven months after she claimed they happened. Following this logic, would make nearly 60 women's sexual assault allegations against Bill Cosby, dating back as far as 1965, dubious as well. I think not.

I suspect the last to go will be Mr. Luna because he will hang on in an attempt to resurrect his soiled reputation. If that happens, there may be an investigation of the board of directors and no longer will the story be about Mr. Luna, Sherrie Kuns-Fehlman, or Mr. Kuns. As Mr. Luna stated, "you can't un-ring that bell," and the board ought to ask, as two earlier scholars once asked, "For whom the bell tolls," maybe it tolls for thee!"

— Joel Wilsey

"The only people this article affects in all reality is the girls of grace homes. If the kuns truly want this program running and helping children why be so bitter that the courts asked you step down, after a very lengthy investigation. This is bigger than Phil Luna, who by the way gets no passes. The Board should at this time encourage Luna to step down.

There's no justification of an almost six figure salary to have a CEO, who does what exactly? Nothing. Put that money into the program so that it can thrive and provide all the services the program was designed to do.

The Kuns and Phil Luna can handle this dispute without bringing the group home into the mix. Step down Luna, do the right thing, let the group home stand!"

— JMO

"I don't agree with Sherri being a person with high integrity. She was rude with several clients and police officers in my presence. She has a sense of entitlement and needs to be bought down to reality. I do agree with Luna being replaced! He does nothing for Grace Homes. He collect a hefty salary for holding a title and nothing more. It's the administration, minus Luna that have gotten that place back on track. A CEO is not even needed there. Valley Voice? Ask Luna who the girls are that live there and to tell you a little bit about them. Better yet ask him about his employees."

— Out With Luna

Comments & Letters

Comments Re: Catherine Doe

On Political Fix: Catherine Doe can't understand why more Mexican people can't win in the political race. It is because the Mexican people can still remember what life was like in Mexico where they came from. So they don't want Mexican politicians telling them what to do.

Mrs. Doe needs to go live in Mexico for a while to see if she knows what she is talking about. The Mexicans come here because they want a better life.

I don't know that Mrs. Doe looks like, but she sure makes fun of what other people look like. She certainly describes these white politicians as something terrible. I am wondering if she is Black or she has a bad life.

Mrs. Doe sounds like she wants Clinton to win. So the Obama policies can keep going and that means bankrupting what was the good old United States of America that believe in God and Jesus.

I am surprised the Valley Voice allows a bad reporter like Catherine Doe to write and report. She writes like she hates America!

Allen A. Costa

Catherine Doe has, indeed, lived in Mexico--for five years, from 1994-1999--ed.

"Move Back to the Monetary System our Founding Fathers Gave Us"

Catherine and Joseph, thought you might be interested in this. Of course, it is only one of many articles on this subject.

My thoughts; accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few is a result of benefiting from Central bank policies, tax policies, and economic control of "we the people".

The solutions? Move back to the monetary system our founding fathers gave us, where the currency is based on value instead of debt.

In a monetary system based on value (ie. Silver, gold, basket of commodities) as the amount of goods and services enter the economy, the "money" increases in purchasing power.

That is exactly the opposite of the loss of value in purchasing power in a fiat money system. So, the fiat system benefits the elite, where the debt free money system benefits the common person.

Create a tax system that taxes everyone on the same level, through a transaction tax on money transfers instead of taxing labor. Eliminating taxation on labor would benefit the poor.

Implement a tax on stock purchases and sales, and on capital transfers. Then, the hedge fund operators would no longer get preferential tax breaks!

The creation of a middle class was accomplished through the creation of products available to the masses which became known as consumerism.

Without broad based consumerism the wealth will always accumulate to the aristocracy, without benefiting the majority of the people.

Dennis Smith
National Builders Supply

> "The only problem that Grace Homes has now is the fact that too many people have their hand in the cookie jar. Too many chefs in the kitchen. Too many Chiefs and incompetent followers. There is simply no unity there at Grace Homes. You have an accountant who pokes her nose in everybody's affairs.
>
> She yelled at me regarding my schedule, and I have no reason as to why. She is rude to everyone and filters a channel of bad energy through the staff. Beware she bites! Also, there are still employees that run back and tell the Kuns what they "think" about Grace Homes. Gossip travels fast there at Grace Homes. Anyone working there would know.
>
> I don't know Mr. Luna on a personal level, but I am sure that he has done nothing wrong. Grace Homes has the potential to be a very rewarding and successful program with the right staff. Rosemary does nothing but break promises to these girls time and time again. She is a liar. If she feels the heat, she quickly passes blame. She is of no service to the girls at Grace Homes.
>
> The supervisors, while I don't like a couple of them, they are much better at handling problems than the office staff. If I try talking to Rosemary, she will start gossiping about other staff and redirect the conversation to something other than the girls and their needs. Jerry simply is not approachable, however, he does get more results than Rosemary. Ms. Kellogg, simply needs to go. She is the seed of the Kuns and should have stayed gone when she left the first time. She had Kundensies that will only bring Grace Homes down to its knees.
>
> I am hoping that Mr. Luna can make it through the storm that is quickly approaching. As for the Kuns, you all made this mess. Let the others who are willing to clean up your shit, clean it, before you wind up in the same system in which Grace Homes was meant to prevent the girls from landing in."

— Recently Departed on Former Long-Time Grace Homes Employee Sues the Ministry

> "Ishida has no chance of being Governor. Being a republican in California is 1 thing but being a "low-level" official in a county nobody ever heard of that anotherl. And, If he cares so much about employment why hasn't he started with Tulare co where we have one of the highest unemployment areas and is probably the "food stamp capital" of California? All the sups do it seems is give themselves and the big shots pay raises. There all republicans and make big money on the public troth. And, the step up thing is a joke. Look at the gangs and crime we have. And, They don't know how to run the courts and jails right. And, why is Tulare co being sued all the time? Why is there no accountability in the depts? the county has laid people off and the big shots get raises. They can't even keep the library open al teast 6 days week when it should be 7!"

— timothy bianco on Voices of the Valley: Allen Ishida

> "I live in Visalia and fly from FAT typically on Delta every other week. i took Great Lakes twice, to LAX. there i could connect at that big hub to others – Delta, Alaska, and AA were all in nearby terminal spaces. i saw little connections with Seaport in Burbank. maybe in Visalia we need to bite the bullet and realize this EAS subsisidized might not really suit us, and instead build on the airport lots perhaps as a free park & ride for Fresno airport, like the VLine — evolved it into more of a dedicated airport shuttle that i can get dropped in VIS, or park free, w/ regular non stop shuttles to/ from FAT – it is only about 45 mins. door to door."

— David on Visalia Considers What's Next for Airport in Wake of SeaPort Departure

> "We have Fresno International Airport that is at our fingertips and needs to be utilized in order to boost the carriers that service the Central Valley. Your suggestion of having non-stop shuttles is an excellent idea. I came from Florida, and that is exactly what the Orlando area did and it turned out to be the best solution.
>
> Kudos for you!"

— Louis on Visalia Considers What's Next for Airport in Wake of SeaPort Departure

Veteran's Corner

Gulf Veterans Medically Unexplained Illnesses

Joe Wright

A prominent condition affecting Gulf War Veterans is a cluster of medically unexplained chronic symptoms that can include fatigue, headaches, joint pain, indigestion, insomnia, dizziness, respiratory disorders and memory problems. VA refers to these illnesses as "chronic multi-symptom illness" and "undiagnosed illnesses." The term "Gulf War Syndrome" is used when referring to medically unexplained symptoms reported by Gulf War Veterans.

Gulf War Veterans who meet the criteria below do not need to prove a connection between their military service and illnesses in order to receive VA disability compensation. VA presumes certain chronic, unexplained symptoms existing for six months or more are related to Gulf War service without regard to cause. These "presumptive" illnesses must have appeared during active duty in the Southwest Asia theater of military operations or by December 31, 2016, and be at least 10% disabling.

Illnesses include: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, a condition of long-term and severe fatigue that is not relieved by rest and is not directly caused by other conditions. Fibromyalgia, a condition characterized by widespread muscle pain. Other symptoms may include insomnia, morning stiffness, headache, and memory problems. Functional gastrointestinal disorders, a group of conditions marked by chronic or recurrent symptoms related to any part of the gastrointestinal tract.

Functional condition refers to an abnormal function of an organ, without a structural alteration in the tissues. Examples include irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), functional dyspepsia, and functional abdominal pain syndrome. Undiagnosed illnesses with symptoms that may include but are not limited to: abnormal weight loss, fatigue, cardiovascular disease, muscle and joint pain, headache, menstrual disorders, neurological and psychological problems, skin conditions, respiratory disorders and sleep disturbances.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office can complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form for the new California Veteran Designation on your driver's license.

We can also issue Veteran ID cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents.

To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com/vets.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call (559)852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

Airport

Continued from p. 4

After SeaPort left, an emergency filing by the DOT put passenger air service for Visalia out to bid – bidding was to close the end of the day on Wednesday, said Airport Manager Mario Cifuentes. As of press time, two airlines had rebid for the service, having both bid in 2014: Mokulele Airlines, owned by Arizona-based Transpac Aviation Inc., which services the Hawaiian Islands, and Boutique Air, based in San Francisco, which recently was awarded EAS in Merced flying to Oakland, Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

The bids are then forwarded to Visalia. The Visalia Airport Advisory Committee, comprised of Cifuentes and City Council Members Warren Gubler and Bob Link will reconvene next week to consider the bids and options for the airport and then will report back to city council.

SeaPort had been highly effective in filling seats from Visalia to Sacramento and Burbank airports. In fact, it had essentially doubled passenger usage in less than one year from that Great Lakes Airlines had provided in 2014.

Council Member Amy Shuklian had admittedly been against renewing passenger service in 2014, but said she went with the staff recommendations, voting in favor of the SeaPort contract.

"It's certainly disappointing," she said of Seaport's pullout, "especially with no notice. SeaPort was exceeding expectations."

Of the new bids for service, "I think it is the prudent thing to do," she said. "The other option is to take the FAA offer (to temporarily halt service) and that might be thing to do with the airport."

Shuklian pointed out that Visalia now provides daily shuttle service from the Visalia Airport to Fresno-Yosemite Airport.

On the other hand, Shuklian admits that people seemed to like the connections to Sacramento and Burbank, which Fresno-Yosemite Airport does not provide.

Gubler is excited that Mokulele Airlines has bid again – he was for the airline in 2014, but he and other council members had concern that the airlines only provided services in Hawaii and had no track record on the mainland.

However, Mokulele does, in fact, provide service on the mainland, and acts as a wet-lease carrier for Sun Air Express, providing service from Pittsburgh to Altoona, NY, Jamestown, NY and Bradford, PA using their own crews flying Cessna Caravans.

By rebidding, Boutique Airlines is making it clear it seeks to increase its California service as well.

"I'm just concerned that if we take the FAA buyout, then we'd have to wait 10 years (to reconsider passenger air service)," Gubler said.

But Nelsen presents a different picture.

"If we had one airline that couldn't make it due to a shortage of pilots, how can another?" he asked.

There is, however, some controversy whether it was really a nationwide shortage of pilots, for SeaPort's discontinuation of service not only to Visalia, but four other California airports as well as Kansas City, MO and two Kansas airports. Many pilot blogs and discussion websites sited financial problems with planes being repossessed.

In any event, council members are interested in what bids come in, and what the committee and staff recommend.

With regard to SeaPort, "my understanding is that basically there are no repercussions," Nelsen said.

Nordstrom

Continued from p. 1

locators and the person in charge of the incentive package are not the ones that make the decision. The company's real estate division puts together a team made up of engineers and construction experts. The site location team was from out of state. They put a package of information together including all the construction details that a developer would need, including Visalia's building codes, permitting process, regulations and CEQA requirements. The site locators assemble the data and send it to the decision making team at Nordstrom, which in Olmos believes is a real estate team and the board of directors.

Olmos added that the people he has been dealing with at Nordstrom have been "top notch." The research teams have asked all the right technical questions and explored every detail. "They have looked under every rock."

Visalians first heard of the possibility of Nordstrom building a million square-foot distribution center mid-December. The other front runner is Fresno and it has been a battle of the fittest ever since. Fresno City Council voted on an incentives packageearly December and Visalia matched their package dollar for dollar the following week. Visalia was offering a parcel in its industrial park for $2 million less than Fresno, and Fresno responded by compensating Nordstrom by $2 million in a different incentive.

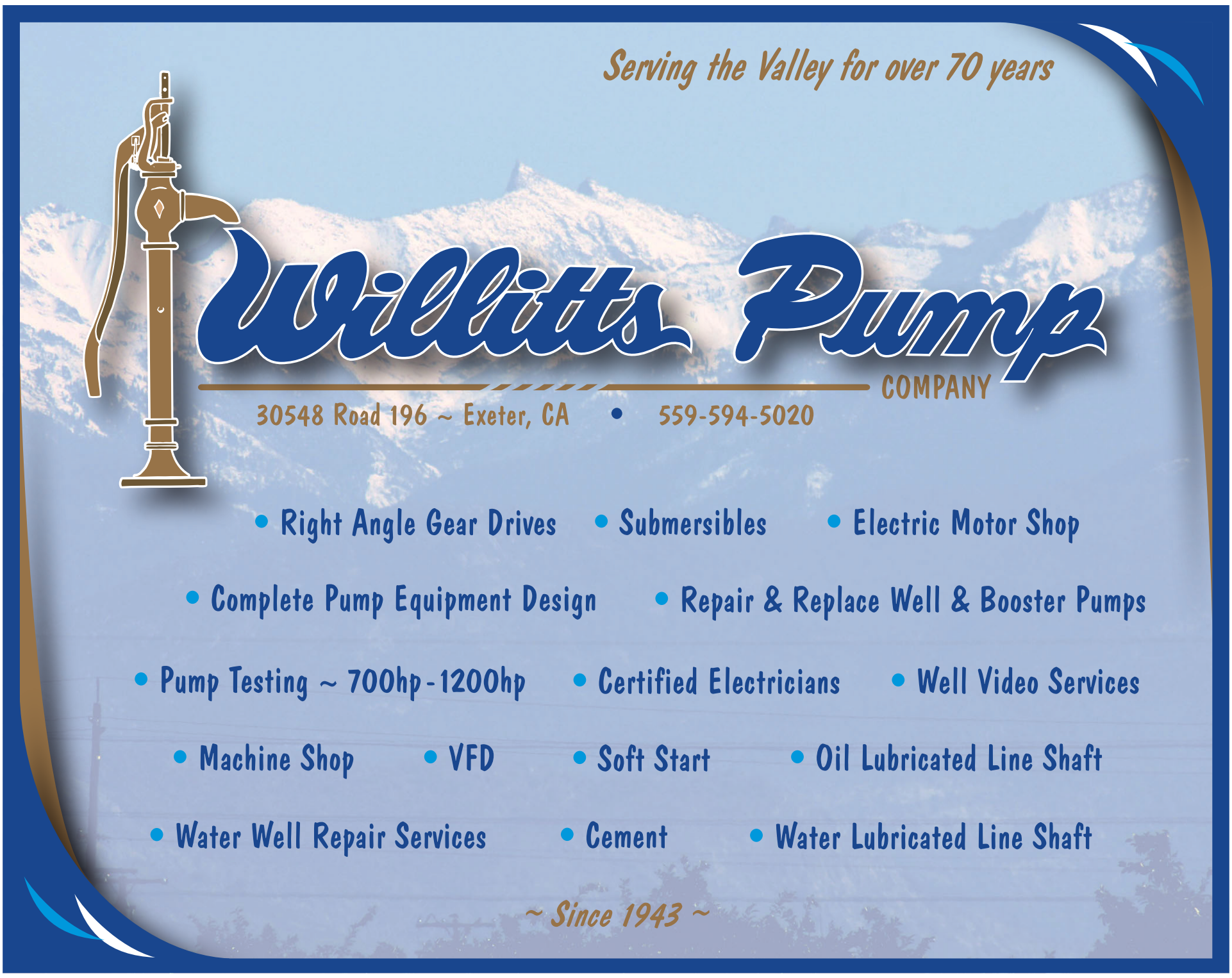
The final attempt to sweeten the deal was Fresno County offering to help the City of Fresno in their workforce investment and training. The deal included possibly paying a portion of Nordstrom workers' salaries while they do job training. After Fresno County stepped up to the plate, Adam Peck, executive director of the Workforce Investment Board for Tulare County, made a similar offer.

The Nordstrom E- Center, or fulfillment center, will service the entire Western United States and could provide up to 1,875 jobs to Visalia and the surrounding area. Nordstrom does $2.4 billion in Internet sales annually and has 77 stores in California with more than half of them in Southern California. That gives Visalia the advantage because it is one hour closer to Los Angeles than Fresno.

A representative for the land owners, Pat Daniels, has been negotiating with Nordstrom for about a year. The property is located in Visalia's Industrial Park north of Riggin Avenue and east of Plaza Drive. The site in Fresno is a 55-acre lot in the North Pointe Business Park, located along Highway 99 in the south end of town.

At the January 19 Visalia City Council meeting, the members took the first step in amending the city's General Plan in response to Nordstrom's proposal to build a large distribution center. The current City Municipal Zoning Code states that a company cannot hire more than 750 employees at one time without a Conditional Use Permit. The council members considered the reasons for behind the zoning requirement seemed as unfounded and they voted unanimously to repeal the employee threshold.

Councilmember Warren Gubler said that the Nordstrom's E-Center would be a nice magnet for the industrial park and show that Tulare County can host big projects like this better than other communities. Mayor Steve Nelsen said that this is a win-win for the county. "We have great companies in the Industrial Park" and he added that they are in support of Nordstrom joining them.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VALLEY VOICE
Valley Scene
4 February, 2016

Symphony Plays Great Movie Themes at Visalia Fox Theater

Donna Orozco

The Tulare County's most popular concert each year is the one featuring movie themes.

Guest saxophonist Jonathan Hulting-Cohen. Courtesy/Tulare County Symphony

This year the Saturday, February 20 concert will be full of music that depicts exhilarating chase scenes, harrowing escapes, fantasy and adventure from popular films such as *ET, Pirates of the Caribbean, Batman, Edward Scissorhands* and many others.

Music director Bruce Kiesling is an admitted movie fanatic and has also written music formovies. His ear is always attuned to great themes.

"The music will not only delight you, but you'll come away with a greater appreciation for movie music and its ability to inform the images we see in a film with emotion, tension, pacing and suspense," he said.

Guest saxophonist Jonathan Hulting-Cohen will play "Escapades" from the film *Catch Me If You Can.*

Hulting-Cohen met Kiesling in Los Angeles when Hulting-Cohen was doing a research project on the El Sistema music system that Kiseling used while he was conducting the Youth Orchestras of Los Angeles.

Hulting-Cohen was going to play "Escapades" in Ann Arbor, and Kiseling asked to hear a recording of it, while deciding whether to play it in Visalia.

This show traditionally sells out, so it is good to get tickets early.

Tickets are $30 to $39.50 at the symphony office, 208 W. Main Street, Suite D, Visalia, downstairs in Montgomery Square.

Student prices are $10.

Tickets are also available by calling, 732-8600 or visit www.tularecountysymphony.com.

The concert begins at 7:30pm at the Visalia Fox Theatre, but the audience is invited to attend the pre-concert preview by Kiesling at 6:45pm.

Kiesling knows all the behind-the-scenes information on the music and composers, so it is a great introduction to the concert.

The Roaring 420s will be at the Cellar Door as part of their first US tour.

The Roaring 420s to Headline Cellar Door on February 13

Staff Reports

Having entered the public in Dresden, Germany, in 2011, The Roaring 420s have arrived on the international psychedelic and garage rock scene.

The Roaring 420s are an incarnation of a young Lou Reed, backed up by the Charles Manson-era Beach Boys--with occasional sitar added. Playing a wild melange of surf rock, psych pop and proto-punk with harmony vocalizations and trippin' guitar tones,their songs are best played out in green sun, blue air and on repeat.

Since releasing their debut LP--*What is Psych?*-- on Stoned Karma Records in 2014, The Roaring 420s have delighted fans and critics alike.

On October 23 of last year they released their second full length LP, *You Can't Get Out Alive*, which was produced by Spanish studio wizard Jorge Muñoz-Cobo Gonzalez, known for recording with Holly Golightly, Fleshtones and Masonics.

A riotous live band, The Roaring 420s has toured Europe several times, most recently with The Blank Tapes (US) with whom they also released a split cassette on Melotron Recordings.

Now the band has embarked on a full US tour in support of *You Can't Get Out Alive*, including a Saturday, February 13 appearance at Visalia's Cellar Door.

When Drummer Luisa Muehl mentioned this was the band's first US tour, she was asked the obvious question: "How do you find America?"

Her response wasn't, "Turn left at Greenland."

"Turn left at Greenland, is of course a cool quote," Muehl said. "Beatles, yay!"

Tickets are $5 for the 21+ 8pm show. The Cellar Door is located at 101 West Main Street in Visalia.

Mavericks Coffee House Proudly Presents 13th Anniversary Show

Dave Stamey, from nearby Orange Cove, has done well out in this cruel and unforgiving world. The former Dude Wrangler and Feedlot Rodeo Star has won about every piece of hardware that Western Music has to offer today. Anyone who has been referred to by *Cowboys & Indians* as "The Charley Russell of Western Music," could get a swelled head, but not our transplanted Montana boy.

After *Western Horseman* said his "Vaquero Song is one of the greatest Western Songs of All Time," he no longer needed his dad Bruce to co-sign for him anymore to buy a used pick up truck. *True West* noted Dave was the "Best Living Western Musician" today; yet our favorite son did not discriminate, and so he continued to sign the Skoal tins of the many adoring Rodeo Buckle Bunnies, as well as autograph ball caps for the young goat ropers, in the parking lot, roping anybody and anything that dared walked by.

Stamey will play on Saturday, February 6 2016 at 7pm. Tickets are $30.

Dave Stamey has been bestowed the following awards: WMA's Entertainer of the Year - 7 times; Male Performer of the Year 5 - times; Songwriter of the Year 5 - times and Academy of Western Artists (AWA) - 1 time.

Dave Stamey will be performing at Mavericks Coffee House. Courtesy/Mavericks

Dogfight — A Musical — Takes Stage at Visalia Ice House on February 5

Nancy Holley

Dogfight, a musical? Really? Sometimes an unlikely title can create the most interest. The Visalia Players believe this will be true when they bring *Dogfight* to the stage of the Ice House Theatre beginning Friday, February 5.

Described as hauntingly beautiful after its Off-Broadway premier, *Dogfight* has achieved worldwide interest with its energetic and poignant songs. The title actually comes from a cruel game sometimes played by guys in the military. To win, one has to bring the ugliest date to a party, a dogfight.

Can a plot so mean have redeeming qualities? Yes! is Director Corey Ralston's response.

"Through the process of obtaining their dates and attending the dogfight, the characters learn about themselves, each other, and grow from the experience."

Ralston describes the show as thought provoking and brings through his directing expertise a sense of vulnerability and reality.

The major male characters are Marines, the Three Bs, out on the town before being shipped to Vietnam. Birdlace (Auggie Hernandez), Bernstein (Michael Seitz), and Boland (Vernon Spence) set out to find the ugliest date, each vowing to win. Their attempt to pick up girls is hilariously portrayed during "Hey Good Lookin'."

Birdlace has no idea the future impact of his choice, Rose (Sadie Pursell).

"She is the most amazing character I have ever had the opportunity to play," notes Pursell. "She goes through the dogfight, that awful experience, and still forgives him."

Hernandez reflects, "Birdlace starts out as a mindless chauvinist, but through meeting Rose he finds his vulnerability and compassion. He is the most complicated character I have ever played and the most intimidating."

Boland breaks the rules in getting his date, paying a hooker, Marcy, to join him. Nicole McAvoy describes Marcy as knowing the score.

"It's not her first rodeo!" McAvoy loves the music from the show, but particularly "Hometown Hero's Ticker Tape Parade."

"It's upbeat and speaks worlds about what was going on with our military at that time," she said.

For Spence, the essence of the show has multiple facets.

"It is fun, upbeat, dark, and real, there is so much uncomfortable truth and yet it can be fun," he said. "It also shows that you can't take anything for granted—people—relationships—everything is fragile and temporary."

When asked about the uniqueness of the show, Seitz replied, "People may see these guys as the bad guys, but they just need to dehumanize themselves so that they can handle going to Vietnam and live through it. Do what they need to do."

Dogfight runs for three weekends at the Ice House Theater at Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on February 5, 6, 12, 13, 19 and 20. Matinees are at 2pm on Sundays, February 7, 14 and 21. To purchase tickets, visit the Visalia Players' website at www.visaliaplayers.org, their Facebook page "Visalia Community Players," or call 734-3900.

NOTE: This show contains adult content and language.

Los Yonic's & Los Caminates to perform at Eagle Mountain

Eagle Mountain Casino welcomes Los Yonic's and Los Caminantes on Friday February 12th at 8pm. Tickets are available through Eagle Mountain Casino's web site at www.eaglemtncasino.comor the gift shop (800)903-3353. Tickets start at only $35 and doors open at 7pm.

The incredibly prolific Los Yonic's formed in the '80s and have released an album nearly every year since. The group, which includes leader Johnny Ayvar, Jose Manuel Zamacona (vocals, guitar), Mountain Martin (piano), Bruno Ayvar, Oscar Perez, Eduardo Corner (saxophone and flute), and Vincente Martinez (saxophone and flute) was formed in San Luis Pedro but relocated to Acapulco.

The band has proven to be incredibly popular with Mexican immigrants in the American Southwest, especially Los Angeles, San Jose, Phoenix, and El Paso, where their brand of tropical/Cumbia music is often performed in local ballrooms.

Los Yonic's mix tropical music with softer ballads, and the combination has earned them several hits over their long career, including "I Am," "Sad Words," and "White Roses."

Los Caminantes are a Mexican Grupera band hailing from San Francisco del Rincón, Guanajuato led by singer-songwriter Agustín Ramírez. Originally named Los Caminantes Aztecas, the group was formed by brothers Agustín, Brígido, Horacio, Martín and along with Humberto "Pecas" Navarro in the mid-1970s.

They released *SupePerder* in 1983 on Luna Records. Included hits, "SupePerder," "Para Que QuieresVolver" and "Dime Si Me Quieres."

The band had a number of Billboard chart hits in the 1980's and 1990's such as 1986's De Guanajuato...Para America! With hit song, "Amor Sin Palabras" ("Love Without Words").

Tragedy occurred when younger brother Martín was killed in a bus accident and in the same year as the tribute album, 1987's Gracias Martin, was dedicated to him. They earned a movie, 1989's Caminantes...Si Hay Caminos.

Caminantes are also known for their playing of variety Regional Mexican styles, e.g., Ranchera, Corrido, Balada, Cumbia, Banda and Mariachi.

They have recorded over 30 albums throughout their career span and had numerous song collaborations with high profile Regional Mexican acts (Diana Reyes, Patrulla 81, Polo Urías y suMaquinaNorteña, Banda Pachuco, etc.).

To this day, Agustín is the remaining original member of Los Caminantes after the departure of Horacio and the passings of Martín, Brígido and Humberto. The band continues to record and tour throughout the United States, Mexico, and Central America.

Eagle Mountain Casino is a full service casino and is owned and operated by the Tule River Tribe. It features 1200 slot machines and 11 table games. Eagle Mountain Casino is a short drive from Bakersfield or Visalia.

What's Happening at
TACHI PALACE HOTEL & CASINO
year of the monkey
CHINESE NEW YEAR
HOT Seats
Monday, February 8TH • 10AM to 5PM
First 100 Guests to earn
888 points on their Premiere Club
Card will win their share of
800,000 Points!
Tachi's
GOLD RUSH
VIRTUAL DRAWINGS
February 8TH to March 16TH
Five winners will be drawn Wednesday February 17TH,
March 2ND, and 16TH at 8pm to win their share of over
$30,000 IN CASH & TACHI CASH!
Valentine's Random Rewards
Sunday, February 14TH
10AM to 2PM
Play with your Premiere Club Card on any Slot Machine to win your share of
$5,000 IN TACHI CASH!
TACHI PALACE
Hotel & Casino
Our Gaming Floor and Table Games
are for guests 21 years and older.
Bingo players must be 18 years and older.
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Education

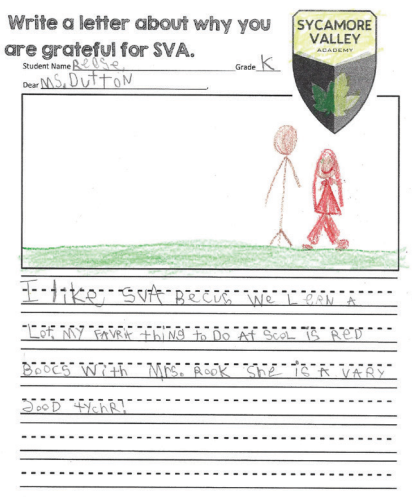
Students of the Sycamore Valley Academy in Visalia. Courtesy/Sycamore Valley Academy

Sycamore Academy Students Celebrate With Letters of Gratitude

Staff Reports

Students of Sycamore Valley Academy (SVA), a public charter school in Visalia, celebrated National School Choice Week along with 15,000 other schools throughout the nation, last week. The kids, from kindergarten through eighth-grade wrote letters of appreciation – appreciation for having the right to choose their school.

"Parents have the right for an educational option that's right for their children," said Claudia Van Groningen, SVA operations director.


Write a letter about why you are grateful for SVA.
SYCAMORE VALLEY ACADEMY
Student Name REESE Grade K
Dear MS. DUTTON
I like SVA BECAUSE WE LEARN A
LOT. MY FAVRR THING TO DO AT SCAL IS RED
BOOKS WITH MRS. BOOK SHE IS A VARY
GOOD TCHAR!

A letter from kindergarten student Reese describing why he likes SVA. Courtesy/SVA

Applications are accepted for all grades and enrollment is chosen by a lottery for availability at each grade level. There is no mandatory grade point average, and the school is a part of the Visalia Unified School District, providing free education to its 350 students.

All students participated in a letter-writing exercise of gratitude for being able to attend their school of choice. The top letter-writers were honored with gold scarves on Friday, provided by organizers of National School Choice Week.

SVA is the only independent charter school for students, grades K-8, in Tulare County and offers an academically accelerated program including differentiated instruction and project-based learning. The school is a model for project-based learning in the county and hosts training workshops for education leaders. SVA has received the Five Star Award from California Association for the Gifted three times since its conception in 2011. This past year, this award was given to just three schools statewide for their exceptional gifted education programs.

"SVA is about preparing students for life, both in our local communityand beyond," said Ruth Dutton, founder and principal-superintendentof SVA. "We are all responsible for our public schools, regardless ofwhether we have children in the school system. A quality education isa right for every child and every family, in every community and everystate. It's common sense . . . no matter where you call home,effective, motivating schools with teachers that challenge ourstudents to learn is what a quality education is all about."

SVA's philosophy of education is rooted in a fundamental belief thatall students can learn, and that all students deserve a qualityeducational experience. By offering differentiated instruction – anorganized, yet flexible way of proactively adjusting teaching andlearning methods to accommodate each child's learning needs andpreferences in order to achieve his or her maximum growth as a learner- SVA ensures all students are included and can be successful inlearning.

In addition to differentiated instruction, SVA's multi-age classroomoffers students a three-part approach to enrichment that includesacademic, creative and service-learning units as well as project-basedlearning that challenges students to not only acquire knowledge andskills but also to think and solve problems about the kind ofknowledge and skills need to successfully complete a project. SVA's instructional program is aligned with new 21st Century Skill Standards for College and Career Readiness.

As a school of choice, Sycamore Valley Academy celebrates National School Choice week to raise awareness of educational options in the community.

"Many misconceptions exist about charter schools. We are a free public school option, providing equitable access to an excellent educational experience." Dutton said.

National School Choice Week is an annual, positive celebration of school choice that provides parents a platform to engage in their child's educational opportunity.This national event coincides with the school's enrollment period.SVA is currently accepting applications for grades K - 8th for its fifth year, 2016-17, now through February 17, 2016.

Great Conversations

Deepening the Wonder: Tillie Olsen's Tell Me a Riddle

Joseph R. Teller

How do you take stock of an entire lifetime? How do you make meaning out of the experiences—the sorrows, joys, disappointments, and triumphs—that amount to a human life?

Can we ever truly enter into the experiences of another—or even really *know* another?

Such questions haunt us whenever we face the death of a loved one. These are also the questions American author Tillie Olsen takes up in her beautifully written and extraordinarily poignant story "Tell Me a Riddle," the longest story in her collection of the same title, discussed by the COS Great Books group this week.

Olsen tells the story of the last years of an aging couple, Jewish immigrants from Russia, to celebrate and mourn the plight of an entire generation who struggled to make a life in twentieth century America.

Tillie Olsen

After 47 years of marriage, David and Eva have raised six children and now find themselves gripped by the "stubborn, gnarled roots of [a] quarrel" that has broken to the surface now that "tending to the needs of others no longer shackle[s] them together."

Ostensibly, they disagree over whether to retire to the tellingly named "Haven" commune or to stay in their home, but the quarrel is ultimately existential: they find themselves wounded and embittered by a lifetime of struggle, resentment, loss, disillusionment and anxiety.

Over the course of the narrative, David and the children discover that Eva has terminal cancer, and without telling her about it, David takes his wife on a series of visits to their children.

Eva reminisces in increasingly fragmented fashion about her life: her youthful love of music, the loss of one of her children, and her revolutionary ideals—and consequent imprisonment—in early twentieth-century Russia. As Eva deteriorates, the reader learns of the pain of the other characters: the regrets of Paul, Hannah and Sammy; the resentments of the eldest daughter, Clara; the profound sadness of Lennie, who mourns not only for his mother's impending death, but "for that in her which never lived (for that which in him might never live)."

Olsen deftly paints each character's internal struggles, allowing the reader to weave in and out of everyone's consciousness in prose that approaches poetry.

Readers might find Eva's husband objectionable. He ridicules her throughout the narrative; at one point he leaves her for the night when she begs him to stay; and he conceals her cancer from her for much of the story. But something important happens in the end that reveals the couple's "infinite, dauntless, and incorruptible" love.

Eva lies on her deathbed, in the care of one of her granddaughters, Jeannie. Jeannie has sketched the old couple in their sleep—Eva in her hospital bed, David in his bed next to her, their hands clasped together in sleep.

Moved by the sketch, David lies down again next to his wife, and holds her hand, manifesting the tender union that has subtended the narrative all along. When Eva's last day comes, Jeannie and David will, together, "help [Eva's] poor body to die," as Eva hallucinates about a wedding she once witnessed in her Russia of long ago.

"Tell Me a Riddle" elicited intense discussion. Some were unsympathetic to David's selfish behavior, while several readers pointed out that both characters were "martyrs" in their own ways. However, one significant theme emerged in our conversation.

Olsen ends her story with the line, "*Death deepens the wonder*." And what is that wonder?

Perhaps it is this: even in the crushing hardship of poverty, in the despairing disappointment of failed dreams, in the quarrelsome selfishness that can take over a marriage—even in all this, love and life can survive, right to the end.

This Valentine's Day, celebrate with something scrumptious!

Sweet Nalani's Bakery

Fresh donuts, cookies, Danish & muffins baked throughout the day.
Bakery specialities include handmade strudel, eclairs, cream horns, chocolate rum balls and florentines - cakes, pies and a wide variety of pastries available by custom order.

33 E. Mill Ave. in Downtown Porterville (559) 783-8865

Calendar

Mondays: Bridge Club, 9:30am-2pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. Admission is free. For additional information call: Joan Dinwiddie @ 732-0855

Mondays: Knitters, 10am-12:30pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. Everyone is welcome.

Fridays: Women's Morning Bible Study, 9am-Noon
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. For additional information call: 739-9010

2nd Tuesday, Monthly: Yappy Hour, 5-9pm
Well-mannered, leashed pets are welcome on the patio at the Planing Mill Artisan Pizzeria, 514 East Main Street, Suite A, in Visalia. A portion of the proceeds is donated to the Valley Oak SPCA. For more information, call 651-1111.

3rd Thursday, Monthly: Gathering At the Oval, 12:30-1pm
Lifting up the needs and concerns of Visalia through individual prayer and meditation at Oval Park, 808 North Court Street in Visalia. For more information, call 967-4065.

3rd Thursday, Monthly: Board Game Night, 6-7:45pm
For ages 10+ at the Visalia Branch Library, 200 West Oak Street. Sign-ups are not required. For more information, call 713-2703.

3rd Thursday, Monthly: Ladies' Night, 6-10pm
At the Clay Cafe in Visalia, 1018 E. Mineral King Ave. $10 studio fee with ceramic purchase
Includes complimentary margarita, dinner and dessert. Door prizes too!
Reservations required: 733-2022

1st and 3rd Thursdays: Central Valley Tea Party Meetings, 6pm
819 West Visalia Road, Farmersville.

February 10th – March 16th (Every Wednesday for 6 weeks 10am-12:30pm)
April 5th – May 10th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am -12:30pm)
July 12th – August 16th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am – 12:30pm)
October 4th – November 8th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am – 12:30pm)
If you would like to learn how to better manage your health, sign up for a free six-week workshop presented by Kaweah Delta Health Care District. The workshop is designed to help people with ongoing health problems such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, asthma, or any other chronic condition. Class size is typically around 12-18 participants. Each session lasts 2 ½ hours. Topics that are covered include: dealing with difficult emotions, managing symptoms, goal setting, problem solving, nutrition, understanding medications, making informed treatment decisions, and increasing strength and stamina through better fitness. This workshop was developed by Dr. Kate Lorig at Stanford University. Participants demonstrate significant improvements in the areas covered. They also report fewer hospitalizations and outpatient visits. The Empowerment for Better Living CDSMP workshops will be offered on a quarterly basis at the newly opened Chronic Disease Management Center located at 325 Willis Street in Visalia.

FEBRUARY

February 4: College of the Sequoia's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (CHAP), 6-9pm
A discussion of screenwriting and careers in film with screenwriter and producer John Brancato, in the COS Visalia campus theater, including a screening of "The Game" (1997) starring Michael Douglas and Sean Penn. For more information on these and other events, contact COS Public Information (publicinfo@cos.edu)

February 5-March 4: Porterville Art Association Show Featuring Artist Peggy Shaffer Woods
The Porterville Art Gallery features the work of many professional and avocational local artists and is dedicated to presenting only the finest work for sale by the artists living in California's Central Valley. The gallery's displays cover a wide variety of styles and media. Please stop by to view our varied and constantly changing exhibits. Admission is free. The Porterville Art Association is located at 151 N. Main Street in Porterville.

February 5: Porterville Art Walk, 5-8pm
A free, self-guided, public art phenomenon. The Porterville Art Walk brings together art lovers and community friends to Porterville's downtown. It occurs the first Friday of every month. Get a free map at the Porterville Art Association, 151 N. Main Street, in Porterville. For more information, call 559-784-4323.

February 5: Art reception, 6-8pm
The Brandon-Mitchell Gallery will hold a reception for artists LInda Grasse and Chuck" Ed" Berry. Located in the Center for Spiritual Living, 117 S. Locust, Visalia (one block south of Main), 559 625-2441 or www.cslvisalia.com

February 5: C.H.A.P. takes closer look at Valley Black settlements, 7-8pm
The Porterville College's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (C.H.A.P.) will begin its spring schedule on Friday, Feb. 5 with a special Black History Month presentation of "Growing on the Side of the Road: Historically Black Settlements in Central California" from 7-8 p.m. in the PC Theater by Michael Eissinger, Doctoral Candidate/Teaching Fellow, World Cultures Graduate Group School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and the Arts at University of California, Merced. The talk is open to the public and free to attend. Parking permits will not be required for this event. Look for more C.H.A.P. presentations coming up throughout the spring. Additionally, a variety of field trips, guest speakers, panel discussions and videos are presented throughout the year and are all open to the public. For more information about C.H.A.P. call Dr. Robert Simpkins at (559) 791-2464. Porterville College is located at 100 E. College Avenue in Porterville. For more information visit www.portervillecollege.edu or call (559) 791-2200.

February 5-21: 'Dogfight' at the Ice House Theatre
A hauntingly beautiful musical about three young Marines having a night out before being shipped to Southeast Asia. Friday and Saturday at 7:30pm. Sunday at 2pm. Ice House Theatre, 410 E. Race, Visalia. www.visaliaplayers.org

February 7: Hanford Cow Run, 7am
The Hanford Cow Run is excellent for beginners and experienced runners. Runners or walkers who sign up for the race should have the chance to record excellent times, as the course is primarily flat. The Half Marathon and 5k race share a start/finish line on North Mustang Drive across from Frontier Elementary School. Runners and walkers will commence at the same time. On race day you may park on the surrounding streets, however, do not park anywhere along the course. Start Times: Half Marathon, 7am; 5K 7:15am. A finishing time limit of 4 hours will be enforced and the course will be cleared by 11am. It is recommended that you pick up your bib on Saturday to save time on race morning and ensure you're ready to run at 7am. Photo ID is required to pick up your race packet. Packets will not be mailed to participants. If you are picking up a packet on behalf of someone else, you must have a written permission note from the participant along with a copy of their photo ID. You may also pick up your packet and check-in on race day between 5:30 - 6:30am at the check-in booth.

February 8: Be Heart Smart: Interactive Forum on Women and Cardiac Health, 5:30-7:30pm
At the Gateway Church, 1100 S. Sowell Street in Visalia, Kaweah Delta is partnering with 210 Connect and the American Heart Association to help you get expert answers to health questions with a free cardiac health forum titled "Be Heart Smart." Moderated by journalist Paul Hurley, this informative and supportive community health event will feature a panel of health experts and community members who will provide a comprehensive picture of heart disease– from prevention to diagnosis, linked health concerns including stroke and stress, as well as recommended nutrition and exercise. This event focuses on making women's heart health a top priority during Go Red for Women - Heart Disease Awareness Month in February. Women and men are invited and encouraged to ask health questions to the panel and join in the discussion.

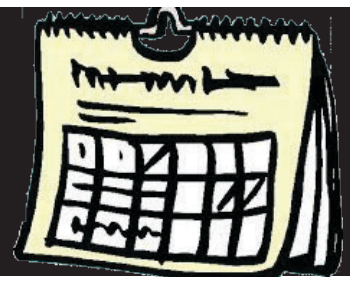
February 9: J.E.C. Offering Free, Public Workshop, 9-10am
The Porterville College Job, Entrepreneur, and Career (J.E.C.) Center invites the public to attend their free, career and wellness development workshops being held at Porterville College, 100 East College Avenue in Porterville off Highway 190 in Porterville. Today: "Discover Your Learning Style," in HC-2061. This workshop will provide an overview of the different learning styles people use to learn information, solve problems and process information. Attendees will identify their personal learning style and learn how to apply it to benefit their educational experience. For more information call (559) 791-2216 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu. Find the Porterville College J.E.C. on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

February 9-11: World Ag Expo 2016
At the International Agri-Center, 4500 South Laspina Street in Tulare. February 9-11, 2016 Tuesday & Wednesday, 9aM - 5pm; Thursday, 9am- 4pm. General Admission: $15 at the gate; children 6 and under, free.

February 10: J.E.C. Offering Free, Public Workshop, 5:30-6:30pm
The Porterville College Job, Entrepreneur, and Career (J.E.C.) Center invites the public to attend their free, career and wellness development workshops being held at Porterville College, 100 East College Avenue in Porterville off Highway 190 in Porterville. Today: "Social Media Marketing," in CA-4. Learn how to use social media to promote your large or small business; what platforms should you use and how. For more information call (559) 791-2216 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu. Find the Porterville College J.E.C. on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

February 10: Way Back Wednesdays--Classic Flicks at the Fox, 7pm
On the second Wednesday monthly through April, 2016, the Visalia Fox Theatre presents a classic film. Admission is $5 and includes a small popcorn. Tonight: Notorious, 1946.

February 11: Boretti, Inc. and Visalia Chamber Session on Workplace Violence, 11:30am-1:30pm
Speaker: Greg Bird, CSP. Topics covered in this session include: Workplace Statistics; Preventing Violence & Preventive Practices; Written Workplace Violence Program; Identifying Problem Situations & Risk Factors of Current Employees; Factors that Contribute to Negativity and Stress; Addressing Threats & Threatening Behavior; What Constitutes a Threat? Threat Assessment & what Questions to Ask; Dealing with the Aftermath. In the Marie Calendar Banquet Room, 350 South Mooney Blvd. in Visa-



lia. $50.00 per person. Meal included. To register, contact Michelle: michelle@borettiinc.com. Pay at the door by cash or check made payable to Boretti, Inc.

February 11: J.E.C. Offering Free, Public Workshop, 8:30-9:30am
The Porterville College Job, Entrepreneur, and Career (J.E.C.) Center invites the public to attend their free, career and wellness development workshops being held at Porterville College, 100 East College Avenue in Porterville off Highway 190 in Porterville. Today: "Choosing Your Major," provided by PC Student Services in HC-2061. Not quite sure where to start when it comes to picking your major, Student Services can help. For more information call (559) 791-2216 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu. Find the Porterville College J.E.C. on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

February 11: Merle Haggard Plays Tachi Palace, 7:30pm
Doors open at 6pm at Tachi Palace's Bingo Hall. Ticket Prices are $35, $45, $75, all reserved seating, and are on sale now. Premiere Club Members receive $5 off per ticket when purchased at the Hotel Gift Shop Only.

February 12-14: Ceramics at the Clay Cafe
Paint a special Valentine ceramic and enjoy complimentary punch and cookies.

All painters welcome to return Valentine's Day at 2pm to meet princess Ariel in her pink gown, receive a special valentine, and enjoy a fun pony ride! No reservations required. Visit claycafevisalia.com for hours.

February 12: "A Perfect Night," 6-8pm
The Creative Center at 410 East Race Avenue in Visalia hosts a reception for artist Joshua Wittman in the Jon Ginsburg Gallery. "A Perfect Night" is Joshua's series of romantic, impressionistic images of a couple out on their first date. Done in acrylics,brushing on thick layers of paint and using a pallet knife, these paintings make a perfect backdrop to start off your Valentine's weekend.

February 12: Los Yonic's and Los Caminantes, 8pm
Eagle Mountain Casino welcomes Los Yonic's and Los Caminantes. Tickets are available through Eagle Mountain Casino's web site at www.eaglemtncasino.com or the gift shop (800)903-3353. Tickets start at only $35 and doors open at 7pm.

February 13: Valentine's Pancake Breakfast, 7:30- 10:30am
Start the Valentine's weekend with a pancake breakfast at the Center for Spiritual Living, 117 S. Locust, Visalia (one street south of Main). Enjoy a great breakfast and view the art show.Tickets $15.559 625-2441.

February 13: Love Our Kids 5k Fun Run, 8:30am
The second annual Love Our Kids 5k Run, benefiting the Strathmore Boys and Girls Club, is a timed event at the expansive Porterville Sports Complex. Walkers are welcome to participate. Since this event raises funds for our youth, family groups are encouraged to participate. Unique medals will be awarded to the first - third place finishers in various age divisions. Costumes are optional, however, there will be special prizes for Valentine themed attire. The first 150 adult registrants (14 and over) are guaranteed our exclusive 2016 Love Our Kids t-shirt and a goodie bag. Adult registration fee: $30 - participants 22 and over ; student registration fee: $20 - ages 14 to 21. Child registration: free - 13 and under with onsite completed waiver. Online registration deadline February 10. Free parking available at the Porterville Sports Complex. Check-in and packet pick-up: 8:30am day of event. Race time: 9:30am, rain or shine, no refunds.

February 13: Lions Club Valentine's Dinner and Dance, 6pm-midnight
The Lions Club of Corcoran is hosting their Valentine Dinner and Dance at 1007 Van Dorsten Avenue in Corcoran. There will be dinner, dessert, drinks, a DJ, a no host bar, door prizes and raffles all night long! Tickets are: Pre-sale $30/couple and $20/single. For more information contact Tammy Jackson at 559-362-5871.

February 16: League of Women Voters Meeting, 11:45am
At Sue Sa's Club House, 699 West Center in Visalia, Kim Loeb, City of Visalia Public Works Department, will speak on "The ABC's of SGMA" and discuss the State Ground Water Law and compliance. A fixed price lunch for $13.00,incuding tax and tip will be served. Reservations are required and the public is welcome. Contact newellgb@hotmail.com.

February 17: J.E.C. Offering Free, Public Workshop, 9-10am
The Porterville College Job, Entrepreneur, and Career (J.E.C.) Center invites the public to attend their free, career and wellness development workshops being held at Porterville College, 100 East College Avenue in Porterville off Highway 190 in Porterville. Today: "Career Readiness," on the SCCR. What does it take to turn a degree into a career? Let the JEC show you how to go step by step, from picking a major to earning a degree, and then finding that perfect job. For more information call (559) 791-2216 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu. Find the Porterville College J.E.C. on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

February 17: J.E.C. Offering Free, Public Workshop, 12-1pm
The Porterville College Job, Entrepreneur, and Career (J.E.C.) Center invites the public to attend their free, career and wellness development workshops being held at Porterville College, 100 East College Avenue in Porterville off Highway 190 in Porterville. Today: "Cash Course-Credit," provided by PC Student Services in AC-121. Learn how to navigate the confusing world of credit and how to use it responsibly. For more information call (559) 791-2216 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu. Find the Porterville College J.E.C. on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

February 20: Porterville College Foundation Hall of Fame Induction Banquet, 6pm
Porterville College is proud to announce the inductees for the sixth annual Porterville College Foundation Hall of Fame Induction Banquet in the Porterville College Student Center, on the Porterville College campus, 100 East College Avenue in Porterville. The 2016 Distinguished Alumni is Joe Ruiz. The 2016 Athletic Hall of Fame inductees are the 2004-05 Porterville College Women's Basketball Team. Congratulations to all inductees and their families. The Alumni Hall of Fame award recognizes former Porterville College students who have made outstanding contributions to both their professions and their communities; these alumni embody the highest standards of excellence. Induction into the Alumni Hall of Fame is the highest honor given to alumni by the Porterville College Foundation. Tickets are $25 each, $130 for a table of six, and $175 for a table of eight. Seating is limited and will sell out fast. Get your tickets today by calling the Foundation Office at (559) 791-2319, from any PC Foundation Board member, or by calling (559) 784-5300.

February 20: Tulare County Symphony presents Great Movies/Great Music: Escapes and Escapades, Doors: 6:30pm/Show: 7:30pm
Great Movies/Great Music: Escapes and Escapades, featuring the music of John Williams, Hans Zimmer and Danny Elfman. This popular series returns with music from the great adventure films, showcasing music from some of today's (and yesterday's) most popular and exciting composers. The music of John Williams takes center stage, joined by two other Rock Star composers and Hollywood heavy-weights, Hans Zimmer and Danny Elfman.

February 20: A Night of... Wine, Cheese, & Chocolate, 6:30-8pm
Are you still thinking of what to give your sweetheart for Valentine's Day? Surprise him or her with an ele-gant evening out, sampling a wide va-riety of fine wines, cheeses, and choc-olates. On Saturday, February 20th, Tulare Historical Museum's ever growing and popular "A Night of...Wine, Cheese, & Choco-late!" is back by popular demand. The event takes place under the backdrop of the Museum's Historical and Art Galleries. Tickets are $35 per person, and can be purchased either by calling the Mu-seum, online at www.tularehistoricalmuseum.org , or by speaking with any of our Board Trustees. Tickets are limited for this event, so be sure to purchase them soon.

February 21: Wine & Dine, a Fundraising Dinner in Support of Habitat For Humanity, 5pm
Chef Karl Merten, owner of Cafe 225, hosts a dinner where wine will be paired with each course for the maximum flavor experience. At Cafe 225, 225 West Main Street in Visalia. Tickets are $60 each. For more information, call Deanna at 734-4040.

February 23: Exercise & You Lecture Series at The Lifestyle Center, 6-7pm
The Lifestyle Center (TLC) invites the community to attend FREE informative lecture series presented by TLC Exercise Physiology Staff. Lectures are from 6:00pm to 7:00pm at TLC conference room located 5105 W. Cypress Ave in Visalia. Please review the following dates and topics and join us. Tonight: Cardiovascular Exercise, presented by: Feliz Santillan, BS

February 25: Bingo For Books At Exeter Branch Library, 2:30-5:30pm
BINGO! The Exeter Branch Library invites children 3-18 to play bingo for a chance to win a book and other prizes. Drop in and play a game on Thursday, February 25. The Friends of the Library-Exeter donated all these wonderful prizes. The Exeter Branch Library is located on 230 E Chestnut in Exeter. For more information, please contact 559-592-5361.The Exeter library is a branch of the Tulare County Library which serves all the citizens of Tulare County with locations in fifteen communities, four book machines, and an online presence at www.tularecountylibrary.org.

February 25: J.E.C. Offering Free, Public Workshop, 3-4pm
The Porterville College Job, Entrepreneur, and Career (J.E.C.) Center invites the public to attend their free, career and wellness development workshops being held at Porterville College, 100 East College Avenue in Porterville off Highway 190 in Porterville. Today: "Student Wellness," provided by Student Services in LIB-449. Learn the basics of student wellness to ensure student success. For more information call (559) 791-2216 or visit www.portervillecollege.edu. Find the Porterville College J.E.C. on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

February 25: Brian Regan, 7:30pm
A night of comedy at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets $30, $35, $40, $45.

Send your calendar items to: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Sports

Preview: The 2016 Redwood Rangers Softball Team

Stefan Barros

The 2016 Redwood Rangers Softball team is coming off a year in which it reached the Valley Championship for the third straight season, tallying a 24-9 record. The Rangers have played in the championship game in the 2013, 2014, and 2015 seasons, winning it all in 2014 over Kingsburg High School.

Head Coach Bob Rooney, who has been with the Rangers Softball Program since 1995, says that this year's team will be young compared to last year's squad and is eager to get this season going to see how they perform.

"We have six players returning from last year's team," he said."Three of them are now seniors and were on the '14 team that won Valley. The other three are now sophomores. I am excited about this team though--looking forward to see how we compete against some of the better teams in our league."

Prior to the 2013 season, the Rangers saw some down years.

"We don't get to recruit," Rooney said,"so it had to be the student-athletes that have come to our school, that has been the biggest difference. In our down years, we really struggled with pitching, and we were down for about five years. Since then we've been pitching and playing good defense."

While the season has not yet started, Rooney still feels like he knows what this team will have to accomplish in order to have success this season.

"I do know this team will be really young," he said."But we'll need our pitching to hold up, our defense to hold up, and get hits, especially timely hits. I know that sounds cliché', but that is the recipe for success."

Rooney does think the team's overall lack of experience is a weakness right now.

"We have inexperience," he said."It usually takes a while for a team to gel. The returning players will have to share the responsibility of leading the team and sharing responsibility with the younger players."

With every team that Rooney coaches, there are a couple of things that he stresses, and some things that are especially important when leading a young team. Rooney does like to change some of his strategies from year to year, though.

"I tell them to take care of the little things, and the big things will take care of themselves. I try not to tell them the same thing every year, though, because the players change and every team you have has its own personality," he said. "People always say that a team should take on the personality of its coach, but I believe it to be the other way around. The coach should take on the personality of the players. A team is like a salad. You have a mix of players, and you're just trying to find a way to make them all fit together."

So far as expectations are concerned for this coming season, Rooney is just trying to keep it simple.

"You go into every game trying to win; some teams you play are strong, some teams are weaker than you. We have to do well in our league to make the playoffs and we have some good teams in our league this year. Hanford West is a team that is really good. But we always expect to do well, and I just try to convey that to our players. We're one of those teams, though, that if we play well, we can beat anybody, and if we play badly we can lose to anybody."

After being the coach at Redwood for 20 years, Rooney doesn't picture himself going anywhere. "I see myself being here for the foreseeable future. I have nothing else to do. As long as I'm here teaching here, I'll be coaching here, and as long as they'll have me here."

The Redwood Rangers are going through conditioning, getting themselves ready for the season. They will open up their 2016 campaign with a doubleheader on Saturday, February 20 at home vs. Tulare Western High School. Game times are set for 10am and 12:30pm.

City of Visalia Live & Play 2016 Registration Now Open

Featuring special events, classes, and programs for everyone from tiny tots to those 50 and better, a new season of fun is on the schedule and the City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department is ready to spring into action.

Registration has opened early for the Live & Play Spring 2016, and the popular activity guide is arriving in mailboxes throughout Visalia. Available in full-color online at www.liveandplayvisalia.com, the spring schedule features details on community favorites like the 11th Annual Eggstravaganza and 7th Annual Mother & Son Campout while introducing new events like the Central California Pickleball Tournament.

In addition to details on a variety of programs and classes, the Live & Play Spring 2016 features a full-color City of Visalia Parks, Facilities, and Trails map that is conveniently placed in the middle of the publication.

Mark your calendars for the free, community events and register soon for your favorite classes and programs. Registration can be completed online, in-person at the Visalia Parks & Recreation Business Office inside the Anthony Community Center, by mail or by fax. For more information, email recreation@visalia.city or call 713-4365.

Rawhide NEWS RELEASE

Visalia Team Seeks Fan Memories

With the franchise's 70th Anniversary dawning in 2016, the Visalia Rawhide are asking people to share their favorite memories from the last 7 decades of Visalia professional baseball.

Fans can send their stories and recollections to Julian@RawhideBaseball.com, or they can also drop off a typed or written version at the ballpark ticket window, if they prefer.

People of all ages are encouraged to share, and some may later be asked if they are willing to have their memories taped for a compilation video that the ballclub hopes to compile.

All participants will be entered to win a trip to the California-Carolina League All-Star Game Week in Lake Elsinore June 20-23, where the League will be celebrating their 75th anniversary & inducting its first class of Hall of Fame members, most of whom will be present at the game's ceremonies.

"We're hoping to hear from all kinds of different people, from all walks of life," said Donny Baarns, Director of Broadcasting and Media. "From memories of what the ballpark was like in decades past, to favorite players, to family times that have been shared, to favorite foods eaten…we're looking for a cross-section of what makes Visalia such a great family and baseball town. This club has always been about far more than just baseball…it's been part of the fabric of Tulare County's life. We're excited to see that reflected as we celebrate another milestone."

The Rawhide begin their 70th Anniversary season on April 7th, with the home opener on Thursday, April 14th against Bakersfield.

Youth Baseball Registration Begins Feburary 8

Staff Reports

The Porterville Parks and Leisure Youth Baseball League welcomes all skill levels and develops fundamentals, character and sportsmanship. The goal is to foster a positive, pressure free environment. It's the perfect fit for a child to truly enjoy the sport and want to return the following season.

Registration for Youth Baseball begins on Monday, February 8 at the Heritage Center, 256 E. Orange Ave. There are extended hours on the first day of registration from 7am- 6pm. The league is designed for boys and girls ages 4 – 13 with a cost of $58.The season will begin in April. Open registration will continue during regular business hours beginning February 9 until all divisions are full. Space is limited so early registration is advised.

Volunteer coaches are needed to help make this league a success. Consider sharing your skills with eager youth in the community. For more information on the league or coaching, call (559) 791-7695 or visit the City of Porterville website. Stay up to date on all services and programs by following Parks & Leisure on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

"A Perfect Night" at Creative Center's Jon Ginsburg Gallery

Joan Constable

The Jon Ginsburg Gallery's first guest artist of the year is Joshua Wittman. Joshua was raised in Tulare. His early influences came from watching cartoons on Saturday mornings. Working in acrylics, watercolor, pastels and ink, Joshua's work is diverse and has been featured on ABC 30 promoting various art shows in which he has participated. "A Perfect Night" is Joshua's series of romantic, impressionistic images of a couple out on their first date. Done in acrylics, brushing on thick layers of paint and using a pallet knife, these paintings make a perfect backdrop to start off your Valentine's weekend! We are also featuring some of Joshua's portrait pieces and other works. He will being demonstrating his skills in the gallery as well for his opening night. Please join us Friday February 12 from 6-8 PM. We plan on it being a "Perfect Night" for you and the one you love. The show will run until February 26.

You can also check out Joshua's work on Facebook at Art by Joshua.

"Under the Lamp Light," by Joshua Wittman

"Strolling Through the Snow," by Joshua Wittman

Green Acres Little Theatre to Present Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Julia Link

It's that time of year again! Green Acres Little Theatre is bringing the first production of the Broadway musical "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" to the Visalia Rotary Theatre. Including more than 60 students, this musical marks Green Acres Little Theatre's 36th year in theatrical excellence.

It is with great excitement that we invite the audience to take a fantastic musical adventure with an out-of-this-world car that flies through the air and sails the seas. This show is based on the beloved 1968 film version of Ian Fleming's children's book, featuring an unforgettable score by the Sherman Brothers--who wrote "Mary Poppins."

An eccentric inventor, Caractacus Potts sets about restoring an old race car from a scrap heap with the help of his children, Jeremy and Jemima. They soon discover the car has magical properties, including the ability to float and take flight. Trouble occurs when the evil Baron Bomburst desires the magic car for himself. The family joins forces with Truly Scrumptious and their batty Grandpa in the craziest adventures imaginable. Green Acres Little Theatre knows you'll find "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" is one family-friendly blockbuster you will find "Truly Scrumptious."

This nationally recognized program is unique in that it gives all students at Green Acres Middle School an opportunity to perform in Broadway-style musicals. If you haven't seen a Green Acres musical, or it's been awhile, we especially invite you to a performance. You are in for a treat that will delight you. Each year plays to sellout audiences who walk away amazed at the talent of these performers.

Performance dates:

Feb. 11th, 12th — 7:30 PM
Feb. 13th — 1:00 and 7:30
Feb. 14th - 2:00 (special benefit performance- Green Acres Little Theatre Foundation)
Tickets may be purchased at
http://greenacresmusical2016.brownpapertickets.com

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* Promo starts 2/8/16 - available only for a limited time!

Tulare County High School Mock Trial Competition Begins

The public is invited to watch Tulare County high school teams compete in the annual Tulare County Mock Trial Competition Semi-finals on Thursday, February 11 from 5-8pm at the Tulare County Courthouse and Finals, Thursday, February 18 from 5-8 pm at the El Diamante High School Theater.

The Mock Trial teams are comprised of 10 to 20 students who take on the roles of lawyers, witnesses, court clerks and bailiffs. All teams make their presentations based on identical hypothetical case materials. Each team, coached by local attorneys and school personnel, presents the case for both the prosecution and defense twice during the course of the competition.

"The Mock Trial Competition is as exciting to watch as any courtroom drama," says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "Our students do an incredible amount of preparation to understand the case law affecting their trial before taking on the roles of attorneys, witnesses and clerks. They do a masterful job of conducting themselves in court."

The teams competing in the 2016 Tulare County Mock Trial Competition represent Dinuba High School, El Diamante High School (Visalia), Exeter Union High School, Golden West High School (Visalia), Mission Oak High School (Tulare), Mt. Whitney High School (Visalia), Orosi High School, Redwood High School (Visalia), Tulare Union High School, Tulare Western High School, and University Preparatory High School (Visalia).

For 2016, Mock Trial student participants throughout California prepared the fictitious case People v. Hayes, which involves the trail of Jamie Hayes, a student and member of the track team at Central Coast University (CCU). Hayes faces a felony charge of murder for the homicide of Lee Valdez, a campus security guard. Hayes is raising the affirmative defense of "defense of another" in order to claim the homicide was justifiable. The prosecution alleges that Hayes struck Valdez in the head with a baseball bat while Valdez was lawfully restraining fellow CCU teammate Casey Barns, a suspect in recent vehicle thefts. The incident occurred near the track team's off-campus house (on university-owned land policed by campus security). The prosecution argues that due to a history of conflict between campus security and the track team, Hayes had shown hostility against campus security and particularly Officer Valdez, and that Hayes was very active in a group against police brutality.

A pretrial issue involves the Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination and concerns a statement made by Hayes during interrogation that Valdez "got what he deserved." The prosecution will argue that Hayes's statement was voluntary and should be included in the prosecution's evidence against Hayes, since the circumstances of the interrogation were constitutional. The defense will counter-argue that the circumstances of the interrogation were harsh enough to make Hayes's statement involuntary and therefore impermissible in the prosecution's case-in-chief.

Students also compete to create courtroom artwork. This entry was submitted for last year's Mock Trial. Courtesy/TCOE

The Tulare County Office of Education would like to thank the many legal community volunteers who donate their time and expertise to make this competition possible.

"Mock Trial is an extremely valuable competition," Vidak said. "We applaud the teachers and attorney-coaches for investing many hours in preparing their students for this event – giving them a glimpse into the workings of our judicial system."

Members of the public, parents, students and teachers are welcome to attend any of the trials.

The champions from the final round of the Tulare County Mock Trial Competition will be eligible to compete in the annual state finals March 18-20.

The Mock Trial Program is sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation, and co-sponsored by the California Department of Education, the State Bar of California, the Young Lawyers' Association and the Daily Journal Corporation. The Tulare County Office of Education coordinates the program locally, with assistance from local attorneys and judges.